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#312



CRISTIANO RONALDO
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NATHAN GALLAGHER

EDITOR'S LETTER...



Becoming an expert takes a combination of talent, luck and practice. Whether you're a world-renowned surgeon or a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, the only way to get to the top of your field is by hard work.

Few have worked harder than Cristiano Ronaldo. His dedication to becoming the best footballer in the world is one of the reasons he graces our cover this month. Read our exclusive interview with him on p54.

The Real Madrid No 7 isn't the only extraordinary person we've talked to this issue. On p42 we visit Derren Brown at his (bizarre) home to talk all things magical and mysterious. Be careful when you read the story. This man can probably make you do anything – before you know it you'll be on all fours barking for food.

Finally, if you want to live forever, have a read of our How To Cheat Death feature on p88. Follow our advice, and you could still be here in 100 years' time, telling the great-great-grandkids just how good a player Ronaldo was. Enjoy the issue.

Damien McSorley, editor-in-chief

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I OBSERVE THINGS
AND REMEMBER THEM VERY ACCURATELY.
I THINK THAT EVEN THE WAY IN WHICH
A MAN SHAVES IN THE MORNING
IS WELL WORTH RECORDING.

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THE TEAM

WHAT FHMERS HAVE BEEN UP TO THIS MONTH

WE CHILLED WITH A FOOTBALL GOD

As you can already tell by the cover, we got to hang out with a proper bona fide legend this month – Ronaldo. There's art director Barney stood just behind the man himself, doing a thumbs up. See? We're practically BFFs. Find out what Cristiano had to say for himself on page 54.



WE CHEERED ON SOME DOLPHINS (NOT REAL ONES)

Now the rugby's over, we're up for watching as many close imitations as we can. Thankfully, Majestic Athletic invited fashion editor Daisy to watch the NFL and wave some pom-poms. So that's what she did.

WE MET A HUGE STAR

Access editor Nick's bid for world domination wasn't going too well – primarily because he's the single least intimidating man on planet Earth. Can Mini-Me finally earn him fear and respect? No. Look at him. Nick's *rubbish*.



WE PLAYED WITH BALLS

It's not always fun and games at the office, you know. Sometimes we go to festivals and shoot models in front of a massive outdoorsy disco ball. Thanks for the invite, The Clear Agency. We had a wicked time.

FHM

IT'S GREAT TO BE A MAN

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LETTERS 12/15

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Prime-time Pam

Being an older reader I can remember the gorgeous Pamela Anderson in her prime, so it was an enjoyable blast from the past seeing her on your cover. Maybe you'll continue the trend and put Elle 'The Body' Macpherson or the beautiful Cindy Crawford in a future issue?

Seán, via email

What about Rachel 'The Hair' off Friends? Or Vicky 'The Tracky' Pollard off Little Britain? The possibilities are endless, Seán.

Letter
of the
month



A serious letter about immigration

Why do we consider immigrants a threat? Is it because British race relations, public services and economic prospects are under stress from foreign arrivals? Is it simply population density? Most Brits don't think anyone here illegally should have access to state schools or healthcare. I think I'm in the minority. I want to help them - they're fleeing an evil and tyrannical regime. I'm positive they'd help us if the roles were reversed.

Danny, via email



We played cupid: an update

You might remember that in the last issue, our letter of the month went to a soon-to-be married couple who'd met through going to a place we'd recommended in FHM. Of course you remember. Well, Tom sent us an update and a photo, and we thought you'd like to see. Congratulations from the whole team, Tom!

Cabin fervour

I enjoyed the 13 Ways To Banish Cabin Fever feature in last issue's Upgrade section. I have a long list of stuff to do when it's raining, which includes cleaning the fish out, housework, watching endless wildlife programmes, learning a new recipe, cutting my toenails, finding that bloody umbrella and moving around the furniture.

Jake, via email

That's a hell of a list, Jake. We'd let Upgrade editor Tom know about your ideas, but he's still stuck somewhere under a blanket fort.





A loyal fan speaks

I just wanted to say a big thank you for always being there over the years and making it so much easier to choose a magazine at my local newsagent rack at the weekend. What better way to honour this than by adding my signed Samantha Janus, July 1996 edition of *FHM* to my man-cave's wall of fame? As you'll see it's a work in progress with a bit of room left, which I hope to fill in the next few years.

Kelham, via email

We salute your dedication to the FHM cause, Kelham.

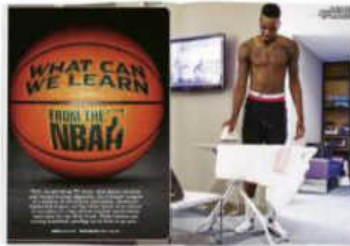
Desperation

This is my LAST attempt at writing the star letter. I've tried being funny, serious, crawling. So what else can I do to make you like my letter the most? Beg? Make

you feel sorry for me? Well I have a TV that's on its last legs and I can't afford a new one. If you don't help me, I'm going to have to go to [inserts name of litigious payday loan company] and we know how that leads to a slippery slope...

Scott, via email

Ah, but you haven't tried all of the above in one go. See how you get on next issue.



Basket case

It's traditional at the end of a football season to moan about how uncompetitive the Premier League is, and how things would be better if we followed some system loosely based on US sports – like in November's NBA feature. But any comparison has to consider that the USA is not the size of the UK; it's roughly the size of Europe.

Justin, via email

True. And they haven't got to deal with the French, either.



FHMManFood of the month:

Congrats to @Homernbloss, whose multiple-plate mastery has won his talented chops a crate of BrewDog Punk IPA and these words from resident *FHM* chef DJ BBO: "What we have here is an example of traditional Asian cooking at its most stomach-hugingly awesome. Well done Sensei. But screw the damn chopsticks – I want that braised pork shot into my mouth from a freakin' cannon..."

SHOW US YOUR MAN FOOD!

Every month, we select the greatest culinary triumph submitted on Twitter or Instagram. Are you the king of crisp sarnies? Do you make some incredible pulled pork? Add #FHMManFood to your picture for a chance to win.

📱 @fhm 📷 @fhmagram

Send us your letters...

WIN A 32" TV AND A COPY OF I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES ON DVD

Got something insightful to say about the mag?

To celebrate the DVD and Blu-ray release of *I Believe In Miracles* – the story of Brian

Clough's European Cup-winning team – on 16 November, we're giving away a 32-inch TV and a copy of the DVD, so you can relive Clough

leading Nottingham Forest to glory.

Write to us (with a picture if possible) via one of the ways on the previous page for your chance to win.





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DECEMBER 2015

ACCESS

IT'S
GREAT
TO BE
A MAN

WHO
SHE?

Age: 27

From: Iowa, US

Likes: Rugby,
clubbing, hiking

Twitter:

@katyjohnson1

Instagram:

@katyevans11



WHAT KATY DID

Meet Katy Johnson Evans, the US model who's ready to take the acting world by storm...

American model Katy Johnson Evans may be making waves in LA right now, but she's more than familiar with this side of the pond. She's married to Scottish rugby player Max Evans, so you're as likely to see her at Murrayfield as on the beaches of Malibu.

Now, having slayed the modelling game, she's preparing for her ground assault on the acting world...

Hi Katy! Is it true you used to present on Celtic TV?

Oh, yeah. Glasgow's a cool city, but it took me a while

to tune into the accent. My first day, I'd been out until 5am. I'd had two hours' sleep and I was so worried I'd reek of booze. My friend told me, "Don't worry, you'll fit in perfectly." I had to interview a load of football fans who'd been drinking for a while.

How did that go?

I enjoyed it. People tried to stop me from doing it, but I'm an independent personality. Once I decide to do something, good luck stopping me.

You've since moved to LA – are you nostalgic for Iowa?

When I was growing up, I hated living there – but now I really enjoy going back. I've just been to the State Fair.

“ I TALK
HOW I *feel.*
I HAVE
NO TIME FOR
BULLSHIT ”



What happens there?

You have all the rides, and a beer tent. You can get any kind of food fried on a stick. Then there's dancing, and the animals – people bring cows, pigs, chickens and rabbits, and they weigh them. The biggest gets a prize.

A little different to LA, then?

Yeah. Health food hasn't really made it to Iowa. They'll fry anything. You put on about 100lb there, but I love it.

Did you try a deep-fried Mars bar in Glasgow?

I'd already had that at the State Fair. We've been doing deep-fried candy bars for years. I never tried haggis. A friend sent me a picture of a cute animal and told me it was a haggis, so I was telling Scottish people they were eating this creature. They just laughed. It was a pretty good joke, but I got my own back.

Your husband is a rugby player – have you been bringing some US-style support to the stands?

To be honest, I thought rugby was like lacrosse. Now I'm practically an expert. I try not





“I’M A
RUGBY
GIRL NOW.
IT’S
much
BETTER THAN
FOOTBALL”



to be the loud American, but I get so worked up. I’m a rugby girl now – it’s much better than football.

Your Instagram is pretty wild – is life really so glamorous?

You know how it is...

Er... not really.

Well, you’re always going to give it a positive spin. I was shooting a commercial in Indonesia last year, and putting up images of this beautiful beach. What you didn’t see was me getting up at 3am. I got bitten by a spider, too.

You’ve been moving into acting: weren’t you in *Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen*?

That was my big debut – I was only there to do some extra work. Michael Bay looked at me and said, “You, come over here.”

I thought I was going to be fired, but he gave me a featured part.

Michael Bay is supposed to be pretty scary. Did he yell at you?

I was terrified. He was screaming at everyone. But he’s the one in charge. You can’t run a crew that size without raising your voice.

And did you get the acting bug?

I’ve fallen in love with it – I’ve started training as an actor.

I want to do improv comedy.

Like *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

I love being funny. I’m not afraid to be completely insane. Tina Fey and Amy Poehler are my heroes.

So you’re pretty fearless?

I talk how I feel – I don’t sugarcoat anything. I have no time for bullshit, and so many people do. Especially in L.A. **FHM**

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Get inspired

HOW I DID IT...

PARKS BONIFAY, 34, PROFESSIONAL WAKEBOARDER

I started water skiing when I was six months old. It's crazy now I think about it. I performed in shows at a Florida resort called Cypress Gardens, and it earned me a Guinness World Record for the youngest water skier. Looking back, I peaked pretty damn early.

By the time I was four, I was doing three shows a day. I was exhausted when I got to kindergarten. My parents were show skiers, and I knew from day one that I wanted to dedicate my life to the water.

Sacrifice is important, but you've got to rebel sometimes. When I was 14, I'd sneak into clubs with a fake ID. Once, I burned the end of a cork and drew a goatee on myself. The bouncer ushered me in.

Success changes everything. I was never a hit with the ladies before I started wakeboarding. But when I began doing flips on ESPN in front of huge crowds, they suddenly started digging my stupid haircut. Go figure.

A career should grow out of a hobby. Fun always comes first. If you're not enjoying your job at the beginning, then you won't want to be doing it in three years' time. Get out of there now.

I've made a career out of being a show-off. I'm the kid on the diving board, screaming for you to watch him take the jump. Showmanship is so important. Muhammad Ali is a huge inspiration, both in and out of the ring.

You always learn best when you're smiling. And it's hard for me not to grin. Wakeboarding has taken me all over the world.

What makes a legend? For me, it's about what you do on and off the field of play. I want to contribute to the sport.

I'm a straight-up adrenaline junkie. If I'm not wakeboarding, then I'm skydiving or speeding down a slope. Once you've felt your heart beat like that, there's no going back. You're always chasing. It's fucking real, you know?

I jumped at the chance of being in *Jackass 3D*. That was before I knew they were going to dress me up as a duck and shoot me with paintballs. Steve-O, Wee Man and myself were catapulted up into the air as the rest of the guys took aim. I ended up getting shot 13 times.

What pisses me off? Bad parking. I've got a big-ass truck, and it hurts like hell when I see small cars over the lines. Apart from that, I'm the easiest going guy you'll ever meet.

I'm in the process of digging my own lake. We're aiming for one 4ft deep. My brother and I have just bought 200 acres of land in Florida, and we're going to turn it into our headquarters.

Pro surfer Kelly Slater is my idol. I still listen to his interviews for motivation. After all is said and done, I just want to be remembered as someone who pushed the sport forward, and helped inspire kids to ride.

Parks Bonifay took part in Red Bull Harbour Reach 2015



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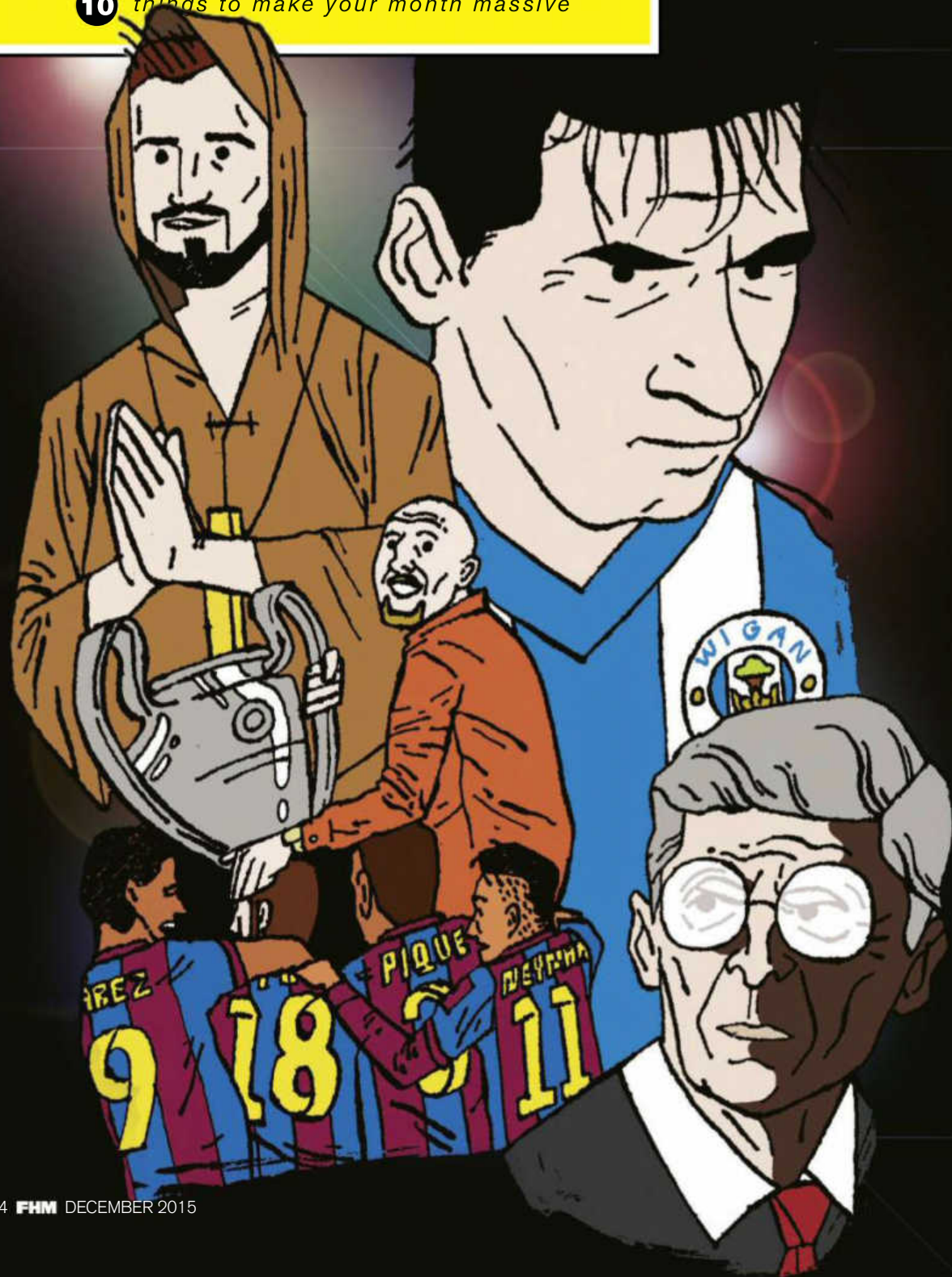
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#BEAHERO

Entertain your brain

10 things to make your month massive



01

Soccerball

Witness a football miracle

● This month's release of *I Believe In Miracles* on DVD celebrates Nottingham Forest's unexpected triumph in the European Cup in 1979. But do we still live in a world of against-all-odds football phenomena? Here are some modern-day miracles we'd love to happen (but probably won't...)

01 IAN HOLLOWAY LEADS BARCELONA TO A HISTORIC QUINTUPLE

Experiments with old legends and intellectual tiki-taka-ists behind them, the top brass at Barcelona make the only managerial decision left to make: they bring in Ian Holloway. It's an immediate success – Ollie turns out to be 'the Neymar whisperer', leading the Brazilian superstar to a record 100-goal haul on the way to the quintuple. "I dunno where I am," Holloway says, after his Champions League win.

02 CARL JENKINSON SWEARS OFF BANTER

It started as a joke: Carl Jenkinson swears off his beloved banter for 30 days as a sponsored stunt for Sport Relief. But six days in, the night sweats behind

him, Jenko realises something: he doesn't need banter. His game improves, his awareness otherworldly. England captaincy follows. Sadly, and inevitably, he unfollows Dapper Laughs on Vine.

03 MESSI BECOMES THE NEW HESKEY

Remember young Emile Heskey? He was all electric pace and unshakeable stability and an unerring finisher, brought through the ranks at a club he adored. Remind you of anyone? Messi and Heskey, one and the same. And so it is destined to be: 34-year-old Leo, shoulders as broad as a house, winds up at Wigan tonking sitters into the crowd.

04 ARSENE WENGER PROUDLY UNVEILS A DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

"I have analysed my squad," Wenger is saying, his arm reaching up and around a lurking 6ft 8in Gary Taylor-Fletcheresque utility man. "And noticed a gap: for the past eight years, we've had nothing in the middle of the park! So I have signed, at market cost, a CDM with a flawless injury record, who will play every game." They win the league at a canter.



02

Guitar god

Get in tune with Kurt Vile

● Fresh from releasing his sixth album *B'lieve I'm Going Down*, the ex The War On Drugs strummer is set to transform your Spotify...

TOWNES VAN ZANDT

"Maybe the greatest songwriter ever. A huge influence on me." Listen to: *Pancho And Lefty*

LUKE ROBERTS

"A young guy from Nashville who's about to get people very excited." Listen to: *I Don't Want You Anymore*

NICK CAVE

"Cave live is out of this world, but his love songs are the best." Listen to: *The Ship Song*

SYD BARRETT

"His tunes are always just rattling around in my head." Listen to: *No Good Trying*

TINARIWEN

"My favourite live act. I've tried playing their songs, but I fuck up." Listen to: *Tenere Taqqim Tossam*

Kurt Vile is on tour now



03

Movie biz

Kill Your Friends with John Niven

● Having worked on the film adaptation of his 2008 breakout novel *Kill Your Friends*, it's safe to assume John Niven knows a thing or two about the movie business – namely, that a no-holds-barred script about a murderous, coke-snorting record industry shark in the '90s Britpop heyday is what's described as a 'hard sell'.

"Characters shouldn't have to be likeable," Niven explains. "But if you've got a script that unapologetically expresses the darkest sides of human nature, it's incredibly difficult to get that film made." The cast is led by a revelatory Nicholas Hoult, best known for *About A Boy*. He might not be the obvious choice to play ruthlessly ambitious Steven Stelfox, but it made sense to Niven.

"Monsters always come dressed as the boy next door. Nic has this boyish charm and is the kind of guy all the secretaries in the office have a crush on. But he also has this steely psychotic side lurking behind the eyes."

Of course, history is full of such anti-heroes. Men who we can't help but take a shine to despite their darker nature. Men we shouldn't get involved with. Men like these...



NICK KYRGIOS

"When it comes to sport, I love the McEnroe-type characters. Sportsmen need to be outspoken because it's such a bland world. Andy Murray's media-trained, but there's a new tennis player called Nick Kyrgios who's so un-PC. There's no filter between his brain and his mouth. I like that."

SATAN

"Satan in John Milton's book *Paradise Lost* is great. Satan's voice is so seductive, much more so than God's. It's the temptation to do bad we're interested in. It was one of the earliest examples that 'happiness writes white' – that the darker side of humanity is infinitely more interesting."

HANNIBAL LECTER

"I've got a very soft spot for Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence Of The Lambs* and *Red Dragon*. I think he really crystallised our fascination with the charming psychopath. You're so taken in by him that you have to force yourself to remember he's killed people – and eaten them."

LIAM GALLAGHER

"In terms of zero fucks given, Liam Gallagher at his peak was always very watchable. It was kind of like watching a toddler where you didn't know what they'd do next. Would they throw themselves off a bridge? Would they stick their fingers in an electrical socket? Completely unpredictable."

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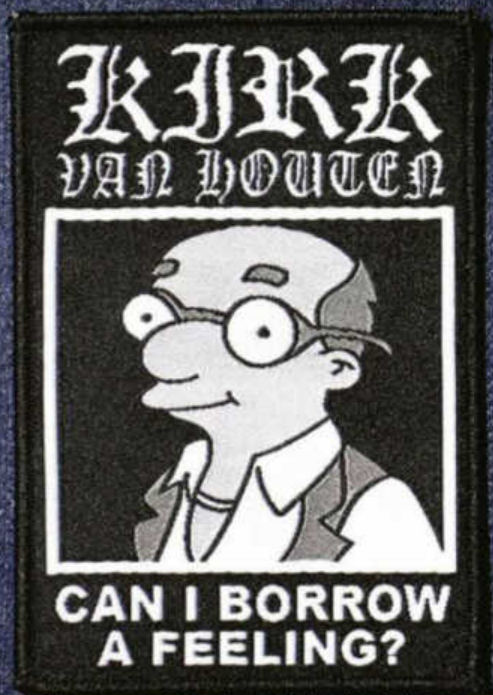
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Glows in the dark!



04

Arm candy

Wear your Bart on your sleeve

From motorbike gangs to The Sex Pistols, denim patches have long saddled the sleeves of some of the baddest motherflippers in history.

So it's no surprise they've enjoyed a massive resurgence this year – but despite what you might think, it's not all about the snake-infested skulls and flaming angel wings. Tap on to Instagram and you'll be met with all manner of stitchwork to adorn your denim – but, if you ask us, it doesn't get any better than these incredible *Simpsons* tributes. Have a gander at mikemccabe.bigcartel.com.

05

Fast times

Learn some F1 lingo

The last race of the Formula 1 season is approaching faster than Lewis Hamilton in a downhill shopping trolley – but will you know what the hell you're talking about when the topic arises down the pub? Bluff your way to pole position with our handy vocab guide.

CHICANE

A sharp set of corners going in different directions on a course. Preferably taken slowly, unless you want a very pricey pile-up on your hands.

RECONNAISSANCE LAP

Despite sounding like what an MI5 spy would call their crotch, it's actually the name for when drivers move into position on the grid for the start of the race.

AQUAPLANING

In rainy conditions, F1 car tyres can lose all grip and skim helplessly across the ground. Though the chances of this happening in the final Abu Dhabi Grand Prix? Minimal.

SLIPSTREAMING

The staple cheeky tactic for the guy in second place; popping behind the car in front will reduce drag and allow the pursuer to shoot past at higher speed.





06

Awards

Predict the Oscars

● Award season is around the corner – but who's in with a shot? We've crunched the data with *FHM's* Oscar predictorator so you don't have to...



THE REVENANT



THE DANISH GIRL



STEVE JOBS



BROOKLYN



BRIDGE OF SPIES



WHAT IS IT?

A fur trapper is mauled by a bear and left for dead by his mates. Understandably miffed, he sets out for revenge.

The story of Einar Wegener, one of the first people to receive sex reassignment surgery.

A look at Apple founder Steve Jobs's life, set at three of his key product launches.

A place in the Big Apple, but also the story of a young Irish immigrant making her way in '50s New York.

A true story looking at the legal battle to save the pilot of a spy plane that crashed in the Soviet Union in 1960.

STAR POWER

Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hardy. No word yet on who's playing the bear.

Brit Tom Hooper directs a classy cast including Eddie Redmayne and Ben Whishaw.

Michael Fassbender is the Apple supremo; Kate Winslet and Seth Rogen support.

This is a big showcase for former child star Saoirse Ronan.

Steven Spielberg directing Tom Hanks with a Coen brothers script.

OSCAR BAITNESS

Director Alejandro G Iñárritu was behind last year's Oscar-botherer *Birdman*.

Cast + director + subject = this should be called Oscar: The Movie

Inspirational hero? Check. Cancer? Check. Actor overdue a big award? Double check.

If Oscars were sharks, *Brooklyn* is swimming off Bondi Beach covered in fish guts.

Pretty much everybody involved has won multiple Oscars, right down to the caterer.

PUB TRIVIA

Its making is already legendary – many of the crew quit in protest at the freezing Canadian locations.

Some activists have criticised the decision to cast a man as a trans woman.

Christian Bale was hired and later walked, as did Leonardo DiCaprio.

This is the first movie adaptation of acclaimed novelist Colm Tóibín's work.

This is one of the first Hollywood roles for Mark Rylance, a stage actor tipped to be the next Ian McKellen.

GO SEE IT WITH

Your bearded survivalist mate who's a bit too into the TA, and Ross Kemp.

Your mum (unless she's a bit 'traditional').

The IT guy from work. Bring tissues.

The entire population of Ireland.

Your mate from eastern Europe who's vaguely nostalgic about communist times.

ODDS

5/1

3/1

7/1

10/1

8/1

Ur mum lol



Game on

Trounce the trolls on *Black Ops III*

● *Call Of Duty* returns this month, along with an annual swarm of trash-talking trolls dead-set on slamming your sub-standard sniping skills. But if anybody knows how to duke it out with online dickheads, it's heckler-slaying comedian Daniel Sloss....

DEFLECT THE MUM JIBES

"Say, 'You obviously didn't have sex with my mother, because she has standards.' Also, point out that while they would very much like to shag your mother, under no circumstances would you ever consider fucking his. That's a far bigger insult."

EDGE THE FAMILY FEUD

"Mum jokes are 10-a-penny; but what if I told you I took your aunt out on a date? Or that your uncle is shit at blowjobs? It would mess with any troll's head. Do they even want their uncle to be good at blowjobs? By the time they've decided, the game will be over. You've won."

FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE

"Take a night course in psychology and get a thorough understanding of what makes human beings tick. Then, after you've gained any and all possible qualifications, proceed to use that knowledge to utterly destroy the troll and their entire sense of self."

ACCEPT YOUR LIMITATIONS

"If you're playing, it's probably because you finally got some time on your own, away from work and commitments. But this is their life. If they're better at headshots than you, it's probably because you were kissing girls while they were practising. Own it."

Daniel Sloss is touring his show Dark now

08

Comedy

Enjoy some British belly laughs

● Give Key & Peele and their US comedy cohorts a well-deserved rest and indulge in some homemade hilarity...



WATCH THE FUNNIEST BRITISH COMEDY IN YEARS

Critically acclaimed low-budget knee-slapper *Convenience*, out now on DVD, is about two would-be robbers who try to loot a petrol station but end up working the night shift. It stars Verne Troyer as a foul-mouthed cowboy, and why the hell not?

CATCH SOME COMEDY MASTERCLASSES

Not only does *Live At The Apollo* return to our telly screens, but November also boasts tours from Harry Enfield and Paul Whitehouse, Sean Lock, Jimmy Carr and Jason Byrne.

WAVE GOODBYE TO AN INSTITUTION

Peep Show's El Dude brothers squirm their way on-screen for the last time in the most moreish show on television. According to Robert Webb, "They will be in horrible pain as usual. They will not have a happy ending." Thank God – we wouldn't have it any other way.



09

Girl crush

Fall for a femme fatale

● The skills required for working on a Bond film are pretty similar to getting the job as the spy himself – secrecy is key, even under relentless interrogation.

That's why Gemita Samarra, Brit-born stunt double for new Bond girl Léa Seydoux, fully deserves her spot in *Spectre*. We spoke to her a month before the movie was released in the UK and, despite our questions, her lips were firmly sealed.

We didn't feel like bugging her about it, on account of the fact that Gemita is, you know, a badass. The actress has been making real waves in the Hollywood stunt world, from spending a day underwater for thriller *Pressure* to skidding around in cars in *24*.

But when it comes to throwing herself into treacherous situations, she doesn't have a bad record. Whether she's spending months on end living out of a tent ("probably the best place I've ever lived") or hopping over to Miami to pursue her Tinseltown dreams (snagging roles in *Kingsman* and *Game Of Thrones*), she has a knack of coming out of these situations in one piece.

SHARING THE GOAL
OF PERFECTION.



NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Sportura



Perpetual Solar
Chronograph

SEIKO

DEDICATED TO PERFECTION

Squad goals



10

Comics

Prepare for a Marvel takeover

● Jessica Jones joins *Daredevil* on Netflix this month, making Jess the latest member of Marvel's The Defenders squad to nab her own series. With *Luke Cage* and *Iron Fist* up next, we thought we'd check out their comic book credentials and see if they're worthy of the small screen treatment...

JESSICA JONES

Appearance: She'll be played by Krysten Ritter, who looks like a hybrid of Zooey Deschanel and a sausage dog (but sexy).

Powers: The ability to fly for a short time, like a paper airplane or something equally pointless.

Hero factor: So unsuccessful, she gave it up to become a private investigator. Her comic was cancelled after 28 issues.

Do they deserve a TV show?

Not great on paper, but did we mention Krysten Ritter? It's a yes from us.

LUKE CAGE

Appearance: Originally, a disco dancer. More recently, like a bouncer who spills your pint on purpose.

Powers: Super strength and invulnerability after a dodgy prison experiment (is there any other kind?) went wrong.

Hero factor: He beat up the Fantastic Four single-handedly which, if you watched their last movie, makes him a god.

Do they deserve a TV show?

Yessir – Luke Cage is a boss.

IRON FIST

Appearance: His flaming fists almost make up for the fact that he wears a do-rag and pops his collar, like David Cameron at a battle rap.

Powers: Gained super speed after plunging his hands into the dying heart of a dragon.

Hero factor: Can summon super-strength, but needs a long sit down afterwards. Fair.

Do they deserve a TV show?

If *Game Of Thrones* has taught us anything, it's drama + dragons = great TV.



HOW HOLLYWOOD MURDERED THE BLOCKBUSTER

Steven Spielberg invented the blockbuster, but what kind of terror hath he wrought in its wake?



There was a time when any new film from Steven Spielberg was a global event. He took the most cinematic of subjects (aliens, dinosaurs, ghosts, shark!) and made accessible movies that appealed to all ages, with a distinctive heart and soul that ensured their classic status decades later. There are many things present in today's blockbusters, but heart and soul aren't generally on the list. Has Hollywood killed off the kind of blockbusters Spielberg used to be synonymous with?

Multiplex cinema has morphed into a soulless gallery of CGI, paper-thin characters and endless marketing. When studios invest more in animation software than writers, and spread the cost by enlisting armies of licensing partners and product placement, no wonder the results are bland.

Online rating service Rotten Tomatoes shows a gradual decline in its ratings going back decades. Sure, we tend to only remember the good movies from the antiquity of the pre-web age, but in recent years have we seen any films

that come anywhere near *ET* or *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*? Hardly.

You also don't need to be an industry insider to see that Hollywood is increasingly out of ideas. In 1981, two of the top 10 grossing films were sequels. In 2011, eight of them were.

Ironically, Spielberg himself helped instigate this decline. He and his contemporary George Lucas hit upon a formula that would attract hordes of teenage and young adult fans – along with their disposable incomes. They were aggressively targeted with films where spectacle and awe overtook character and plot.

There's little wrong with *Return Of The Jedi*, but it's not going to compete on quality with *The French Connection* or *The Godfather* – and that's before you even get to the whizz-bang era of *Top Gun*, when the corporate blockbuster really took hold. The edgy 'New Hollywood' of the '70s was replaced by a new world of tie-in merchandising [Fig. 1] and wide releases on an unprecedented scale.

At the same time, studios were bought up by mega-corporations who put suits rather than creatives in charge. Their job wasn't art; instead, it was to chase the kind of money that *Jaws* and *Star Wars* raked in, and they've been chasing it ever since.

Summer at the cinema is now a deafening parade of sound and fury, with quality in continuing decline. Even Spielberg's recent blockbusters can be underwhelming. *Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* [Fig. 2] faced the kind of critical barbs that were never levelled at *Jaws* or *Jurassic Park* – Peter Bradshaw of *The Guardian* branded it "pointless".

A few monster hits usually comprise around 5% of a studio's output but can earn up to 80% of its entire annual revenue. If you're going to bet the farm on a handful of projects, it helps if they return your investment. Names that sell themselves, such as Harry Potter, Marvel, Star Wars or Pixar, effectively become brands for film making.

Recognition factor is everything. That's doubly important considering a studio can easily spend \$100 million marketing a \$200 million film, leading to the bizarre situation where movies taking half a billion dollars can still be considered disappointments.

Spending more cash also means the films must become increasingly homogenised to appeal to the cultural sensibilities of overseas audiences. After overtaking Japan as the second-biggest market outside the US, China is now a particular focus in Hollywood [Fig. 3] and getting the approval of the notoriously opaque state film authorities means self-censoring any controversial plots or characters. Case in point: the 2012 *Red Dawn* remake was revised after filming to make the villainous invaders North Korean rather than Chinese. It's also become routine to bloat films with unnecessary detours to Asia, as per *The Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *Transformers: Age of Extinction* or even *The Dark Knight*.

But there are still gems on big screens. Previously the home video market could represent up to 50% of a film's total revenue and in the '80s it launched many low-level production companies that made a fortune in straight-to-video films. The DVD market may have collapsed, but there is reason for optimism in the explosion of (legit) streaming services and their increasing willingness to support interesting cinema – last month, Netflix released *Beasts Of No Nation*, featuring some amazing talent both in front of and behind the camera. As big studios concern themselves almost exclusively with blockbusters, it's creating a quality vacuum that small indie studios are rushing to fill up. When 2014 came to a close, many critics lauded it as one of the best years on screen thanks to indie movies with creative vibrancy, such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *The Wolf Of Wall Street*, *Whiplash* and *Boyhood*.

Great movies do exist, as they always have – if you can tune out the white noise of the new blockbuster. **PHM**



Fig. 1

Merchandising tie-ins have become feeders to film geeks' collections.



Fig. 2

A less agile Harrison Ford returned for another Indiana Jones sequel.

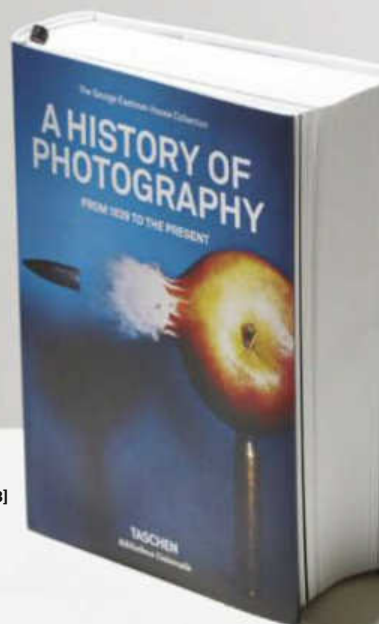


Fig. 3

Hollywood has started censoring itself for its Asian audiences.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Become the snap happy chappy you always wanted to be



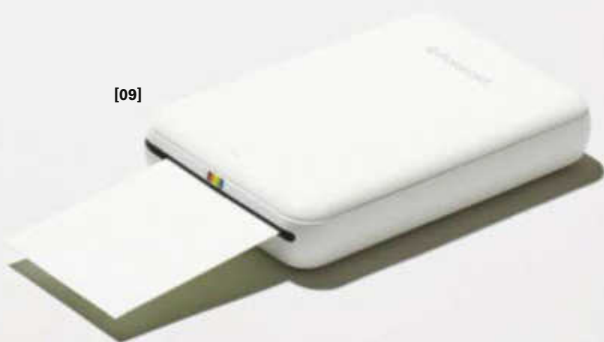
[07]



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[09]



01 SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

The panoramic feature on your phone's camera has one fatal flaw: your shaky mits ruining the photo. Set your phone up on one of these rotating gadgets and you'll get perfect landscapes without transforming anyone into a terrifying mutant. *Panoramic tripod*, £20, urbanoutfitters.co.uk

02 GET RETRO

Polaroid photos aren't just for travel bloggers and your girlfriend's 'memory box'. This is perfect for casual camera heads who just want to take some quick 'n' easy retro shots. *Polaroid camera and film*, £180, urbanoutfitters.co.uk

03 TREAT YOUR EYES

A coffee table-topper bursting with hundreds of pieces of bloody lovely photography. Cut them out, stick them in your own album and whip it out at parties – nobody will know. *A History Of Photography: From 1839 To The Present*, £13.99, taschen.com

04 COMMAND A TANK

An absolute beast of a machine from Canon with 24.2 megapixel resolution, resulting in single-solitary-tear-inducingly beautiful picture quality. Best for: taking arty pictures of leaves while standing still on a busy footpath. *Canon EOS 750D*, £599.99, currys.co.uk

05 MARVEL AT YOUR MOBILE

Upgrade your iPhone camera and beat the sun's

gnarly glare with this essential clip-on staple. *Neewer HD CPL Filter*, £9.62, amazon.co.uk

06 APPRECIATE THE LITTLE THINGS

It might be smaller than a meaty piece of popcorn chicken, but GoPro's latest offering packs a real punch in the tech stakes. That's not to mention that it's light as a feather and can survive under water. *GoPro Hero 4 Session*, £288, amazon.co.uk

07 LOOK THE PART

There are times when your plastic bag cupboard just won't offer the solution you need. Instead, opt for a dapper Billingham camera carrier, favoured by professional snappers and style dons alike. Who knows, people might actually think you know what you're doing. *Billingham camera bag*, £95.97, amazon.co.uk

08 KEEP YOUR COOL

Powerful, compact and cool – this is the kind of camera James Bond would use. Well, he'd use a high-tech biro lid or something, but you get the point. *Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-HX60*, £179, amazon.co.uk

09 ENJOY A QUICKIE

You know that weird thing where you flap and blow on a freshly printed photo? You're not actually supposed to do that. Fun though, isn't it? Be a renegade on the go with this ace mini printer. *Polaroid mobile photo printer*, £150, urbanoutfitters.co.uk

WHAT'S YOUR

We asked a bunch of doggy devotees for the one



**Elliot, 30, builder,
Buckinghamshire**

"People who walk and eat a Greggs at the same time. I hate Greggs. You can print that. I don't even care."



**Kelly, 26, pharmaceutical
supplier, Surrey**

"When people don't pick up after their dogs. How would you feel if someone did a shit in your garden?"



**Sarah, 32,
dog blogger, London**

"The sentence 'It's just a dog.' It's annoying, and I'm known to get quite mouthy about it."



**Katie, 24, editorial
assistant, London**

"When people at work send bitchy emails about people stealing stuff from the fridge. It's the worst."



**Drew, 34, marketing
exec, London**

"People who hog the equipment at the gym and spend the whole time checking Facebook on their phone."



**Amy, 19, healthcare
assistant, Bournemouth**

"I once made fun of cyclists on Twitter and about 100 of them started abusing me. They're rubbish."

BIGGEST PET PEEVE?

ACCESS

thing that gets their collar in a tangle



**Isha, 21, student,
Hertfordshire**

"People who eat while they talk. I can see all of the food in your mouth. Stop it. You're gross."



**Linda, 25, visual
effects, Poland**

"My mum calling me. The last time she called she said I should have a child instead of two dogs."



**Stephen, 48, dog
breeder, Lincolnshire**

"Geriatrics who drive slowly when you're trying to get anywhere. I wish I had a machine to destroy them."



**Matthew, 26, retail
assistant, Bury St Edmunds**

"People who think my dog is a pug. He's a Boston terrier crossed with a French bulldog. Not a fucking pug."



**Tina, 48,
housewife, London**

"When you rip the toilet paper but get that long, skinny tear. There should be loo roll that rips perfectly."



**Gareth, 36,
IT consultant, London**

"My girlfriend leaves her contact lenses lying about. I wake up and my body is covered in them."

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New style

HOW TO CUSTOMISE YOUR CLOBBER

Why run with the pack when you can make your clothing as unique as you?

➔ There are a few things Pharrell Williams has done that, let's face it, you're unlikely to do yourself. Work with Snoop Dogg. Record with Britney Spears. Wear a massive hat. OK, so that one's pretty achievable.

But they're not the only way you can take after the pint-sized super-producer. Pharrell has been recruited to customise a whole range of Adidas trainers for his Pharrell Superstar range and, here at *FHM*, we've always thought if something is good enough for one of the world's coolest men, it's good enough for us.

"People throw shade at Pharrell, but you've got to admit the man has some one-off swag," says *FHM* fashion editor Daisy. "We'd like to join his customised gang, please."

Customisation is hot right now, and we're not talking getting your initials on a dressing gown. T-shirt printer YR Store offers a design-your-own tee service at Topman's London Oxford Street branch – but if you can't get to the capital, there's a whole bunch of other booty for you to tinker with. Nixon allows you to do what you want with its watches any way you see fit, and we could play with the customisation features on the Nike website literally all day. Check these out for starters...

Trainers, from £120, nike.com



Tee, £30, Topman Oxford Street store



Watch, from £109, Nixon London store

IS EVERYTHING UNDER **THIS MAN'S** CONTROL?



DERREN BROWN KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. OR, AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT HE WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE. *FHM* SITS DOWN WITH BRITAIN'S GREATEST ILLUSIONIST AND MIND READER WITH A SINGLE GOAL: TO GET INSIDE HIS HEAD

Words: Matt Blake
Photography: Pal Hansen
Grooming: Claire Woods



For a glimpse inside Derren Brown's head, you should look inside his house. It says more about Britain's greatest mind reader than a story ever could. For starters, the three-storey London house is full of stuffed animals. There's an 8ft giraffe craning out of the wallpaper, a moose, a goose and a stillborn pickled chimp in a jar (everything, he says, died of natural causes). There are parrots, peacocks, penguins and a six-legged sheep. Some are dead pets, like the moray eel and the dog. The unicorn, we're guessing, is not. You half expect to see the wrinkly corpse of Doctor Dolittle himself hanging stiff on the hat-stand.

"I know it's pretty weird, but I like the freaky stuff," Derren tells us. "Over there, pull that lamp..." He points to a wall-mounted light beside a big bookshelf. We do as we're told and the bookshelf swings open to reveal a secret staircase to an underground lair. "That's my steam room," he says at the bottom of the stairs before turning along a short corridor, "and this is my cinema. Nice, isn't it?" Its red velvet carpet, six large seats and 10ft screen speak for themselves. Then, one of the stuffed parrots – now very much alive – dive-bombs us from nowhere, squawking, "Bye bye, bye bye," and pecking our ear. "Don't worry about Rasputin, he's just jealous," Derren laughs. "If he really didn't like you, he'd shit on your head."

We've popped over to Derren Brown's house for a cup of tea and a tour after our photo shoot at a nearby studio. Nothing here – not the animals, the bookcases, nor the terrifyingly realistic latex 'death mask' of Matt Lucas's severed head by the door – is as it seems. "I just love facsimile and fabrication and things looking real that aren't," explains Derren. "I don't know why, but that's always excited me."

Derren Brown has found a lucrative career in making the unreal look real. After all, here is a guy who has made a grown man double over in pain at an imaginary stomach punch; convinced a group of law-abiding citizens to commit armed robbery; predicted the National Lottery; and hypnotised a man to assassinate Stephen Fry. That's just some of what he's done for TV. Two of his six stage shows have won Laurence Olivier awards, enthralling sell-out audiences with his unique cocktail of hypnotism, manipulation, body-language reading, memory games, misdirection and other subliminal crafts. His seventh stage show, *Miracle*, finished its UK tour this summer and will move to London this »



month. That show, like all his others, will almost certainly sell out.

And yet, has there ever been a performer so confident on stage and so lacking in self-belief off? "It's a job that can feel really trivial and stupid," he says. "I love it, especially the stage stuff, but a large part of me feels like it's sort of mucking around, like it's all a bit... pointless. It's lovely when people occasionally write to me saying that something I've done has meant something to them. Otherwise it's just showing off, isn't it?"

His honesty is destabilising. Coming into the interview, we had planned to do battle before we broke into the brain of Britain's greatest mind reader. We at least expected him to put up a fight. But he's offering himself on a platter. Isn't he? On closer inspection, it occurs to us that he might be subtly mirroring our body language – a leg cross here, a chin scratch there. His eye contact is intense but non-threatening. His voice is like caramel and his manner oddly soothing. Even though we're asking the questions, we can't shake a niggle: who, really, is interviewing Derren Brown? Are we? Or is he?

"My job is about creating the illusion of control," he says. "All the things I do, a magic trick or hypnosis, are experiences that the participant is creating in their own head. I just create a narrative to give that person a particular sort of experience but, ultimately, they're doing it themselves."

Has it ever occurred to him to harness his powers for evil? "That'd be exhausting," he says. "I'd rather use it for good. Really, all this was born out of wanting to impress

people. I think any kid who gets into magic does it because they don't feel impressive. Look at a lot of magicians and you can see a lonely child in their background."

Was Derren a lonely child? "I was solitary, but not unhappy. Mum thought I had a drug problem because I spent so much time in my room. But I was just drawing mostly and, for a period, building a Lego wanking machine."

Derren Brown was, by his own admission, a weird kid. Born in Purley, south London, to a swimming teacher and an ex-model, he was an only child until the age of nine, when his brother Dominic arrived. He went to Whitgift School in Croydon where he "fell in with a very uncool crowd". "I wasn't bullied, but I found the sporty kids intimidating," he says. It was around this time that adolescent confusion over his sexuality began to set in. "I sort of knew [I was gay] but wasn't sure," he says. "Then I thought it would pass." So he threw himself into Christian evangelism, which, for a while, acted as a "veil to hide behind and never address it".

But by the end of his first year at Bristol University, he had swapped God for philosophy and the veil of Christianity for an actual magician's cloak. "I was the guy reading Nietzsche in a cape, so of course all the other students thought I was an absolute prick, which I was," he says, laughing. Now a "born-again atheist", it would still take another decade for him to come out publicly. But, just as he created a character out of his Christianity, he did so out of his magic. "I saw a hypnotist called Martin

and it all just clicked. It turned out the sporty types I was intimidated by were most responsive to hypnosis, so I suddenly became quite cool among them; I became able to control them too, which is the opposite of being intimidated by them." He got a tortoise he would walk on a lead and a parrot he could hypnotise by blinking. The weird kid was still a bit weird, but now he had schtick. "I was the hypnotist guy," he laughs. "People would let me stick them to chairs or whatever and I got bolder and bolder with it."

After a few years doing sleight-of-hand card tricks in bars and hypnosis in small theatres around Bristol, a TV producer asked him to try out for a new show. *Derren Brown: Mind Control* aired on Channel 4 in 2000. Over the next 15 years, he would enthral his public with increasingly outlandish stunts on screen and stage, from playing Russian roulette on live TV to tricking a woman into believing she was dead. Has it ever gone wrong? He grimaces. "I had a full-blown vagina on stage this tour. A girl came on stage in Birmingham in a very short skirt," he says. "She was meant to fall back into a guy's arms but as he caught her, he accidentally pulled her skirt up and she wasn't wearing any knickers. She got back up absolutely nonplussed, straightened herself out and went back to her seat. That was a memorable moment... and unusual to have two cunts on stage."

Derren's funny – and he loves a dirty joke, usually at his own expense. »

DERREN BROWN TAKES PHOTOS TOO... AND THIS IS WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE

"These two ladies are in a posh part of Athens. Sometimes you feel conspicuous, even a bit pervy, taking pictures; here there were lots of bathers around and there was no way of hiding that I was photographing them. The more you try to hide it, the creepier you become. In the end I just crouched down behind them and took it."



**"ALL THE THINGS I DO ARE
EXPERIENCES THE PARTICIPANT
IS CREATING IN THEIR OWN HEAD"**



"This was in Rome. I like strong lines and shapes, so when I saw a couple walking into such a compelling background, I ran after them and snapped a few shots without them seeing."



"I took this in the market streets of Athens. She was sat in a big open window and, of course, made a very striking image for a black and white photograph. I took it as I walked past, before she noticed."



**"LOOK AT A LOT OF
MAGICIANS AND
YOU'LL SEE A LONELY
CHILD IN THE
BACKGROUND"**



"This was in Istanbul. I went there with an old school friend who takes street photographs too. You can pretty much be anywhere where there are people and get lost in your own little world."



"This is from Athens. He's dealing with a spot in the mirror of the motorcycle. He was so absorbed, I was able to take lots of pictures and get in quite close. The other two driving past made it for me."





But he stops laughing when he moves from a wardrobe malfunction to malfunctions of the mind. More than once, he says, people have found themselves stuck to their seats after a show or plunged into a full-blown trance. "It sounds like I'm making this up but it does happen, even if I haven't done anything overtly hypnotic," he adds. "They panic and their family is upset but all they have to do is understand that they are fine. But the story in their head is saying, 'I'm hypnotised and I can't get out of it – Derren Brown has done something to me.' I can always get them out of it but that's the weird thing about doing what I do: if you go and see a band and then crash your car on the way home, you'd never think of blaming the band, whereas you come and see my show and... well."

Hypnotists don't hypnotise people, people do. That's Derren's line, and he's sticking to it. "Hypnosis is nothing more than suggestibility," he says. "It's a sort of emotional openness, and you see it in certain people. Every time the lights come up, I'm looking to see who's slack-jawed and wide-eyed. They're good signals that someone's open to suggestion. Then I give them a context in which to think they're being hypnotised, and allow people's natural suggestibility to take over. It's amazing how ignorant we are about the world of suggestion. A lot of people will just say, 'Oh, I don't believe in hypnosis, it must be done with stooges.' But

suggestion is the same unconscious psychological response that makes us believe what a doctor tells us. Suggestion is so part of everyday life yet it's left to entertainers like me, or charlatans, or new-age therapists, to cash in on it because people don't really understand it. Strange, isn't it?"

One gimmick to try to convince sceptics he's not using stooges in the crowd sees Derren throw a frisbee from the stage. The person catching it is invited to participate in the next trick. When we saw him in Aylesbury, we caught the frisbee and ended up on stage. Needless to say, he blew our minds into a thousand pieces of what-the-fuck? which we're still picking up today.

Derren's on his feet. "RASPUTIN!" he yelps, taking off into another room. The bird's made a break for it. "Shit, he's going to escape... BOYS!" he calls the two lads cleaning his tropical fish tank upstairs. "Shut the window, Rasputin's on the move." After a muffled kerfuffle, he returns with a mug of tea emblazoned with the words 'Derren Brown: Mind Control'. "Sorry about the mug," he says. "Terribly narcissistic, isn't it?"

At home, Derren likes the quiet life. He loves classical music and reading and painting. His hyper-realist and hauntingly beautiful portraits are exhibited in galleries in London and New York; recent subjects include Michael Sheen, Dame Judi Dench and his parents. He has also recently taken up street photography and just returned from Istanbul, where he spent a week roaming the city with his camera. "I'm interested in feelings

of connectivity with people, because I'm on the introverted side," he says. "Photography is a way for me to engage with the world in a way I haven't before. It's very honest."

He's also writing a book about happiness. In light of his past, he's thought about it a lot. Is he happy now? "Yes, I think I am," he replies. What's his secret? "Don't try to control things that are out of your control," he says definitively. "Learn to enjoy things as they are rather than perpetually climbing that invisible ladder to the future. That's a very Christian idea – suffer now and your reward awaits you on the horizon – that's now fed into the modern capitalist idea that you work now to be rewarded in future. It doesn't add up to me. The key is realising that none of us have a birth right to happiness and positive thinking alone won't make you happy. You can only control your thoughts and your actions."

But you can control other people's thoughts and actions, apparently without them knowing, we say. We saw it on stage. "That's happening now," he purrs, that caramel voice suddenly gooier than usual. Is it? The room does seem warmer. We feel fuzzy. And what's that breeze?

"Are you saying this whole time, you've used us to interview yourself?" we say, blinking like a moron.

"Yes, I have," he replies. "Those notes on your pad are just childish scribbles. And look down... you're not wearing any trousers." **FHM**

Derren Brown: *Miracle is at The Palace Theatre, London from 11 November to 16 January*

"Istanbul again. Sometimes you just have to be brazen. The three stools grabbed me first. He looks like a miniature man. It's all amusing and satisfying in a way that's difficult to put your finger on."



"I walked past this kid, unsure if it was right to take a picture. I was in Istanbul, and I speak no Turkish. I walked past for a photo, then decided to go back. He seemed oblivious. I still find it touching."



Drink like a man

THE FHM CRAFT BEER AWARDS 2015

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BEER COLLECTIVE



We've sipped, sunk, quaffed and drunk through oceans of beer this year. Now it's time to reward the best of the best...



2ND

Pressure Drop Pale Fire (4.8%)

If, like us, you're always the first to the bar, this is the beer you want to hand your mates. The flavour is familiar enough for them to enjoy, but contains the legendary Hop X, born from a science experiment that helps take it all the way to boss level.



BEST ALL-DAY SESSION BEW

1ST

Siren Undercurrent (4.5%)

We hung a 'best newcomer' medal around this bottleneck last year, and since then this has consistently been the beer we've reached for when booze o'clock swings around. No man-fridge is truly complete without a row of these chilling in the door. A wonderfully mysterious ale.



3RD

BrewDog Five AM Red Ale (5.4%)

Last year we'd have bolted for the door if handed a red ale: it just *sounds* like a brain-rotter. But this has become our go-to brewski at BrewDog's killer pubs. It's no flavour bomb, but who cares when it's just so damn smooth?



2ND

Wild Beer Co Wildebeest (11%)

When the percentages start hitting double figures, you'd better know what you're in for. Through one door, a brandy glass filled with this incredible weapon of mass destruction, through the other, a misjudged night that finishes in your local A&E.



BEST HAMMER-BLOW BEVVY

1ST

Rebel Mexi-Cocoa Stout (8.5%)

This southern hero came out of the shadows during our Cornwall vs London Craft Beer Showdown (check out our YouTube vid), and blew the socks off our booze pros. A triple-infused chocolate and vanilla stout, it possesses the strength to land a KO right on your kisser.



3RD

Northern Monk Mocha Porter (5.9%)

It's nowhere near as strong as its fellow winners in this category, but this Yorkshire brewery has earned its place on the podium thanks to the toasty bear-like belly hug that the black stuff gives you as it hits your gut. Heaven on earth.



2ND

Bevog Rudeen Black IPA (7.4%)

With labels depicting Brothers Grimm-like monsters and coming from a small town amazingly named Bad Radkersburg, Bevog Brewery has become the standard-bearer for the craft beer revolution in Austria.

BEST INTERNATIONAL ACT


1ST

Rogue Sriracha Chilli Stout (5.7%)

We've slathered sriracha chilli sauce on everything from bacon sandwiches (incredible) to porridge (not so incredible). But in a pint? Only US craft beer lunatics Rogue were brave/crazy enough to risk brewing it with a stout. And good lord did it pay off.



3RD

To Øl Final Frontier (9.0%)

Straight outta Scandinavia, this carries a Viking hammer blow of boozy strength. Norway's finest brewery has created this sequel to its successful First Frontier and it's best suited to pouring out right at the end of a bloody great evening.



2ND

Mad Hatter Hare Of Darkness (7.4%)

We don't know much about these Liverpoolians, but can kinda guess they have a twisted sense of humour. This label looks straight from the childhood-ruining dream sequence from *Watership Down*. Amazing, but still utterly petrifying.


BEST DRESSED BEER


1ST

Beavertown Quelle Saison (4.1%)

Still the coolest of the lot, Beavertown continues to turn cans of beer into works of art. With skull portraits and "space nonsense" penned by illustrator Nick Dwyer, this saison (our tippie of the summer) deserves its own wall space in The Louvre.



3RD

BrewDog Punk IPA (5.6%)

Of course our favourite Scottish punks have gone one better than everyone else. Right when the world and his drunken uncle are shunning bottles for cans, BrewDog go supersize and launch their world-famous Punk IPA in a huge 'tall boy'.

BEST NEW BREWERY
1ST Mondo

It's yet to blow a single candle out on a birthday cake, but we're already gasping for more from this baby-faced brewery. Owners Thomas Palmer and Todd Matteson learned their crafts in Germany, the US, Japan and Spain before showcasing their skills in Southwest London.

2ND Cloudwater

With the team behind this Manchester brewery having a combined CV that lists Marble, Summer Wine and BrewDog as previous employers, things were only ever going to go down a storm. These beers are fresher than a slap round the face from a White Walker.

3RD Bradford Brewery

Bradford is probably the last place you'd think of hitting for a craft beer pilgrimage, but the West Yorkshire city has gone bonkers for the microbrew. Among a handful of speciality bars is Bradford Brewery, where you can drink awesome nectar within sniffing distance of where it was born.

Email a snap of your very own craft beer collection to letters@fhm.com for a chance to win loads of tasty brewskies courtesy of The Beer Collective.





BBQ BURGHETTI

FEATURING GUEST CHEFS

RED'S TRUE BARBECUE

THE RECIPE

Takes 60 mins

Ingredients

250g beef mince
200g chopped steak
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
Rapeseed oil
Sea salt
4 rashers streaky bacon
4 slices cheese
1 diced white onion
1 chopped green pepper
1 crushed garlic clove
6 chopped cherry tomatoes
2 chopped carrots

1 tbsp tomato purée
1 chopped red chilli
1 tsp dried oregano
Ketchup
Barbecue sauce
4 squares dark chocolate
Spaghetti

For the Texas buns

1 garlic clove
Chopped thyme and parsley
Butter
Brioche burger buns
Gorgonzola cheese

01

Get your hands messy mixing mince, chopped steak and Worcester sauce together, forming four patties. Oil them, season with salt, and place them under the grill with your bacon. Leave to cook for 10 minutes, flipping and introducing cheese halfway through. Take the bacon out when it's crispy. Once your burgers are cooked and cooled, chop them up roughly.



02

Heat some oil over a medium heat and pile in your onion, pepper, garlic tomatoes and carrots. Once they're sautéed, pour in the tomato purée, chilli and oregano and cook for 3 minutes. Throw in some ketchup and barbecue sauce, and stir occasionally for 15 minutes.

03

Add your chopped bacon cheeseburgers to the mix and drop in the chocolate. Simmer with the lid on for half an hour, adding water if it gets too thick. Stir, stir, stir. Meanwhile, make the spaghetti. Pour the meat mixture on to your spaghetti from a great height like a vengeful god.



04

For the Texas buns, chop your garlic and throw it in a bowl with the herbs and butter. Season and mash it around with a fork until soft. Proceed to spoon it liberally on to your brioche buns, and grill for 2 minutes. Add some Gorgonzola halfway through, then grill for a few more minutes until crispy.



This month's challenger...

PAUL CHUCKLE

He's known for ballsing up the simplest of tasks, but can this Chuckle Brother finally prove himself?



01 What's your favourite smell?

Bacon cooking in the morning. I'm a better cook than my wife.

Bloke ✓

02 Have you ever had sex in a public place?

In the back of cars. This was in the late '60s, so there was nowhere else to go. It wasn't dogging.

Bloke ✓

03 What's the most masculine thing you've ever done?

Surfing in Jersey. I spent the summer of 1975 on the waves. I bought the wetsuit, the surfboard, the lot. Barry can't even swim.

Bloke ✓

04 What's the biggest thing you've set on fire?

I've only lit bonfires before. I'm not some kind of pyromaniac.

Not bloke ✗

05 Do you own any coloured jeans?

Black. Blue. That's all. No white, red or orange ones – I leave that to Barry.

Bloke ✓

06 Have you ever had a notably successful session of DIY?

I remember doing a brilliant bathroom. I bought a house 25 years ago that had no bathroom or kitchen. My wrists have gone now.

Bloke ✓

07 Have you ever thrown a punch and missed?

I think everyone has at some time or another. It's not easy to connect when you've had a few. When I was 18, all my friends were rockers. I remember going out for a drink one night and a guy smacked me for nothing. I looked round and said, "You all right?" and he just whacked me again. He must have had a row with his missus or something.

Bloke ✓

08 Have you ever thought that you might be Jesus?

Only once – and then I stepped out of the boat and plunged straight down to the bottom.

Bloke ✓

09 Have you ever killed and then eaten something?

No. I love meat – I'll eat it all day long – but I could not physically kill an animal. Or a person, to be honest.

Not bloke ✗

10 Have you ever eaten a raw egg?

Eurgh. No way. It's the sliminess – I can't be doing with that.

Not bloke ✗

11 Have you ever cried when people from broken homes sing on *The X Factor*?

No. What does make me cry is death. I'm terrible at funerals. There's nothing worse, in my opinion.

Bloke ✓

12 Have you ever wet your adult pants?

No, not that I can remember. But I've probably got it to come in the future. There might have been one or two nights that I can't remember – I'm a bit of a party animal. I like to go out and have a booze-up.

Bloke ✓

13 Do you iron your socks or underwear?

I don't, personally. My wife does. She always does the underpants.

Bloke ✓

14 What do you keep in your car glove compartment?

Mainly petrol receipts for the taxman. But I have to wear ladies' knickers now, ever since my wife found a pair in the glove box.

Not bloke ✗

15 Have you ever let a girl put make-up on you?

No. Not even my granddaughters. I'm from Rotherham.

Bloke ✓

11/15

So there you have it – Paul Chuckle is not a pyromaniac, a dogger or a murderer. He is, however, an absolute B.L.O.K.E. Cheers Mr Chuckle!

The Chuckle Brothers: Fifty Years Of To Me... To You, *is out now* (£11.50, World's Fair)



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THE REAL DEAL

Photography: Nathan Gallagher
Words: Andy Jones

With his fourth Golden Boot award in the bag, there's no doubt that Ronaldo is the world's greatest footballer. So when he invited FHM to Spain for an exclusive interview, we didn't need to be asked twice...

**CRISTIANO
RONALDO**



**CRISTIANO
RONALDO**



Slip past the door staff at Ramses – a restaurant and bar on Madrid's manic Plaza de la Independencia – on a weekday afternoon, and you'll immediately find yourself in an oasis of calm and measured luxury. So far, so tasteful.

But if you look around for a while, your attention may be grabbed by the sight of one gentlemen who just happens to be one of the most famous faces in global sport.

He doesn't prop up the bar, but instead sits at a quiet table in the corner, people-watching, going through his emails, maybe having a business meeting. Cristiano Ronaldo – because that's who we're talking about – likes to hold court over the busy plaza below, furiously planning.

These days, the 30-year-old has half an eye on life after football. The central figure in that life is still Cristiano Ronaldo the sports star – record-breaker, goal-getter, jaw-dropper – but beyond that lies an untapped reservoir of potential business adventures. Football boots one minute, briefcase the next.

But it won't be any old tat he'll stick his name on. Ronaldo is a perfectionist and, like his tricks and skills, he's working every detail right. Just as kids ape his free kick technique in the playground – the familiar wide stance followed by the almighty whack of menace – he plans to have us all slavishly copying his fragrances, style and health regime. If other footballers can do it, why can't Cristiano?

He's already got the fragrance, Cristiano Ronaldo Legacy, and even the way it was made tells you a lot about his character.

"I would dash off from the

training ground and spend two hours a day just trying things out," he says. "They say, 'That one smells like Gucci, this one like Dolce & Gabbana.' But I chose what I like. I became so involved, obsessed with it. Everything has to be top. Big. Unique! Like me."

Now, as *FHM* sits down for our exclusive chat with Ronaldo (the only UK magazine to be invited to do so), we notice that everything about him is shiny – hair, shoes, teeth – except his skin, which is, of course, matte and blemish-free. His eyebrows have been tweaked, his hands are manicured and his lips are glossy. In short, he looks absolutely incredible – the perfect athlete for the high definition age.

Fine details matter to Ronaldo. Every day he does countless stretches to avoid injury (seriously, how many times has one of the most fouled players on the planet ever been out?), eats well, sleeps right. Ronaldo never drinks – his father died of an alcohol-related illness – and he has shunned football's obligatory tattoos because it stops him donating blood. Just as every pass on the pitch is carefully measured in the microsecond it takes a brain sensor to jerk a nerve ending in the leg, every nuance on Ronaldo's new field of play is marked out too.

At the launch of his new fragrance (naturally, at Ramses), *FHM* is told there was just one man who handpicked the table arrangements, canapés, lighting, gold and black balloons and legions of identically dressed brunette models at the event. Clue: it wasn't Ronaldo's business manager.

Being Cristiano looks exhausting. He has his own line in underwear,

clothing and endorsed health products. Spend 20 minutes in his company and it's no stretch to imagine him, still in his training gear, looking through bottle designs on his phone, or testing notes of apple and sandalwood on his wrists. Ronaldo wants to rule the world.

DADDY RONALDO

Despite outward appearances, the man himself is humble and sincere. In fact, he's actually a good laugh.

In the middle of his on-stage speech at the launch, an over-eager photographer sends part of the carefully selected decor crashing to the floor. Bits of wood and flowers go everywhere.

Pepe, Ronaldo's Real Madrid teammate, sensing weakness in the same way he would in an opposing striker, whoops with laughter in a bid to put Cristiano off. Ronaldo begins his carefully prepared address again – giggling at Pepe's chiding – and making light of it all. Spanish, Portuguese, English – during the speech, the star addresses the crowd in the whole range.

Back with *FHM*, he relaxes. But his favourite subject isn't goalscoring or Ballon d'Ors: it's his five-year-old son, Cristiano Jr. Ice-cool when talking about business and football, Ronaldo gets glinty-eyed about being a dad.

"I never imagined that something would change the way I look at my life so much," he says. "It's changed my mind about everything. Being a father was always the dream for me. It's something I always thought about. I say to my friends, team-mates, all the time now, 'I want more.' It's all I talk about."

So how many little Cristianos does he want? Five, six? "Why not? I think I have good conditions to have many kids so I want this. Let's find the right woman!"

That's the kind of sentence that makes every female in the world's ears prick up, but being a »

"I WANT FIVE, SIX KIDS. WHY NOT? I THINK I HAVE GOOD CONDITIONS TO HAVE MANY. LET'S FIND THE RIGHT WOMAN!"

Darren Fletcher on Ronaldo

The West Brom captain discusses his former Man United teammate



"People don't believe Cris has a great sense of humour, but he never took himself seriously. He'd be in front of the mirror telling everyone how beautiful he was. He probably meant it, but he was also laughing at himself. He liked to make people laugh and because of that he was extremely popular.

"People forget he didn't speak English when he arrived. He was determined to learn the language and he studied very hard. He was speaking English very quickly and with that came an appreciation for our humour. He'd put on a Manchester accent – 'Ey up lad', that kind of thing – when he could barely speak English. Confidence wasn't a problem.

"In training, he'd do these flicks and tricks. He'd always be on the training field, trying to improve. If it didn't work at first he'd keep going – and he'd get it right eventually.

"He used to blow us away every day because of how good he was. What really came through is that he loved life and football – that was obvious from day one."

A YOUNG RONALDO WITH HIS PARENTS, MARIA AND JOSÉ; SIGNING FOR MANCHESTER UNITED IN 2003 WITH SIR ALEX FERGUSON; AND AS A PROUD DAD WITH CRISTIANO JNR, HIS FIVE-YEAR-OLD SON



"LIVING IN AMERICA IS POSSIBLE. I'D DEFINITELY THINK ABOUT PLAYING THERE FOR A YEAR"

papa is what now makes CR7 tick. "He's a fantastic boy – I'm so proud," he says. "Any father has a special, different life with his son that is all their own. I love just to be with him: sat in bed, speaking with him, watching TV, watching football, playing on the iPad, watching cartoons together. He's very cool and now he's five his mind is starting to change. To see your son grow up with his own different mind – it's beautiful."

He's for real. Ronaldo gushes about giving his son everything he didn't have growing up in Madeira – going to the right school, learning more languages. "He will speak three languages straight from the start," he says, adamantly.

Forget pictures of Ronaldo holidaying with glamorous women or scoring goals – in between dashing off to collect his son from school, the Cartoon Network is where Cristiano's eyes are most of the time. "I have all my favourites to watch, so it's good we like the same ones," he says. "*Tom And Jerry, Mickey Mouse, Iron Man*. We watch many. But now little Cristiano is starting to move on and instead he's getting into music. He likes to dance around to hip-hop and reggae when I have it on – he's like, 'Daddy, Daddy, you know this music?' He's music-mad."

FUTURE PLANS: BALL IN THE USA

Planning ahead, the Portugal captain is eyeing a tilt at cracking America, too. He dismisses tabloid stories he has paid \$18.5 million for a flat in Trump Tower, New York – "The rumours are crazy. I can't sit there and say, 'That is true, that is not true, that one is sort of true'" – but the idea of following Pirlo, Gerrard and co out to the US definitely appeals. "I do not close the doors on any league or any place. I always say to go and live in America is always possible. I would definitely think about

**CRISTIANO
RONALDO**



**CRISTIANO
RONALDO**



“BRITISH FANS ARE AMAZING. THEY RESPECT YOU, MOTIVATE YOU AND PUSH YOU. I HAVE GOOD MEMORIES OF THE UK”

playing there for one year.”

Eyes always front – no room to pass backwards, only forwards – but he still has time for Manchester. “United treated me like a son,” he says. “I was there for six years and had some unbelievable times. Many of my friends there have now left the club, but I am in touch with Nani, Anderson, Ferdinand, Vidic, Evra, Fletcher. And, of course, Giggs is now a coach there – we had a chat when we saw each other in the USA. I speak to the kit man, everybody. I have fantastic memories of being there.”

Ronaldo – apparently without sarcasm – says he even misses supporters in Premier League grounds. “Honestly, UK fans are amazing. For me, they are one of the best because they are polite, they respect you, they push you all the time and motivate you. I love them. I have so many good memories of being in the UK.”

It’s not a fib either. Every returning club legend is obliged to say good things, but according to René Meulensteen – Manchester United first team coach during Ronaldo’s stay – the goal machine practises what he preaches. After Real Madrid played Manchester United in 2013 at the Bernabeu – a match in which Cristiano scored – Ronaldo made an appearance in the away dressing room.

“We saw him briefly before the game, but afterwards he spent a lot of time with his old teammates. I spent a good 50 minutes with him talking about his time in Madrid and how much he enjoyed his time at United and the work we did. He’s a very respectful, intelligent boy. Sir Alex will tell you – the whole United dressing room will tell

you – the moment he walked in, we knew we had a special player.”

THE BIGGEST STAR ON THE PLANET

Ronaldo the brand is growing. In October, he won his fourth European Golden Boot, while a documentary film, *Ronaldo* (made by the team behind *Senna* and *Amy*), is out this month. In terms of money, his earnings were £52 million in 2014 according to *Forbes* magazine, and he has more than 175 million social media followers. He’s especially big on Instagram: a single picture of him with his son got more than one million Likes at New Year.

We tell him how we once visited a village in Gambia, 150 miles from the capital, Banjul, where there was no electricity, no running water and no internet. Yet on the outside walls of the houses was a mural of Cristiano Ronaldo that someone from the village had painted. If he can go beyond the reach of modern civilisation, how big can he get?

“I want to be the biggest and best I can be,” he says. “I have seen these pictures before. I use that as motivation for me to work better in my job. I want to make people happy, to entertain them – honestly I do. These people see this guy and say, ‘He works a lot, he tries to do good things. I want to be like him.’ How can that not be great?”

A life that’s great for someone that has already achieved greatness. As he poses with half a dozen models to promote his own brand fragrance, life does look pretty amazing for Ronaldo.

Cristiano Ronaldo Legacy is available at Boots and The Perfume Shop »

Ronaldo in numbers

2 FIFA Ballon d’Or awards

1 FIFA World Player Of The Year award

1 European Ballon d’Or award

2 Champions League wins

3 Premier League wins

1 La Liga win

1 FA Cup win

2 League Cup wins

2 Club World Cup wins

9 UEFA Team of the Year inclusions

4 Champions League Golden Boots

4 European Golden Shoes



“WE HELPED MAKE RONALDO THE PLAYER HE IS TODAY”

The transformation from precocious teenager to world number one at Manchester United happened under the eye of coach René Meulensteen. Here he tells *FHM* exactly how they made him so good



Apart from being blessed with natural talent and an aptitude for hard work, Cristiano Ronaldo needed a plan for greatness when he arrived at Manchester United in 2003.

The lad from Madeira was already on his way. The first Sporting Lisbon player ever to progress through the under-16s, under-17s, under-18s, reserves and first team within a single season, Ronaldo became Britain's most expensive teenage footballer when he signed for United for £12.24 million in 2003.

“Right from the moment he came in, Ronaldo had unbelievably strong, intrinsic motivation,” says René Meulensteen, coach at Manchester United throughout most of Ronaldo's stay there.

“You see that now when he scores five goals in a game – some players score two and ease off. Not Ronaldo. If you talked to him, even way back at Sporting Lisbon, he wanted to be the best player in the world. The next step for him was finding out how to achieve that.” Here's how they did it...

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

“Cristiano is very receptive. Anything he could take on board to achieve his goals, he would. Some professional players need constant reminding about looking after themselves. With Cristiano, you never had to do that. He knows. Even when he was at Manchester United he had his own cook at home to ensure that every meal he was eating was right. He's extremely dedicated to his stretching routine and massages – they're always done and executed in the right way. His fitness record is therefore phenomenal.”

AMBITION

“I said to Cris, ‘Look at the best players in the past – nearly all of them played in your position. Who would you like to emulate? Di Stéfano, Best, Cruyff, Pelé...’ I tried to take him on a journey where he mentally mapped out his goals. I didn't do anything revolutionary, but I made him – in his own thoughts – create a jigsaw of what a world-class player should be. Technical, physical, mental – you make him confront what he needs to improve on. You then empower him to follow that road map. Everything he needed to do he did. The physique, mentality, skills, technique – he worked phenomenally hard to ensure he ticked every box.”

FINISHING

“One of the main things we wanted to help Cristiano with was scoring. He always tried to score the perfect goal – like hitting the top corner – but in the process was squandering opportunities. We made him look at the top scorers at United – Solskjaer, Cole, Sheringham, Van Nistelrooy – what was the trend? They were all clinical and scored scruffy goals – off the shin, off the knee. We

started to work on making him appreciate the variety of scoring goals – how different they can be.

"I put cones in a grid around the box so he could understand the areas of entry into the box and then what type of finish he'd use to score depending on the goalkeeper's position. I wanted him to understand that every time he was approaching the box he knew what zone he was coming into and therefore what foot and finish he'd need to use before the ball even came in. He loved all of that."

BODY LANGUAGE

"When he first arrived, Cristiano would get annoyed – in games and in training – when he'd been kicked or not given a free kick. He'd slap his hands on the floor. I said, 'Cris, you want people to kick you. That's them admitting they can't stop you. If a defender sees you're getting annoyed, they know they've unsettled you. If you keep ice-cold, straight faced – like Federer plays tennis – you become untouchable. Defenders give up – they see you're unflappable.' I also showed him old clips of Johan Cruyff ghosting past tackles or seeing fouls coming, getting out of the way. He's excellent at hurdling challenges now. He just glides through people."

ACCURACY

"To hone his accuracy, we put different coloured shirts in various areas of the goal netting. Each colour represented a separate section.

"I'd start off by making him shoot at a colour. Then, with him looking away, I'd ask him where the yellow bib was in the goal. At first he couldn't tell me. Then he'd make a point of thinking about where each section of the goal was in relation to him. Later, with his back to goal, I'd throw him four balls in succession and at the same time shout

a colour for him to hit. It was making him think – while the ball was coming to him – where in the net the ball was going to be put.

"We simulated it in games, too, picking a marker behind each goal: a supporter in a bright jacket, a steward, a hoarding. You can visualise hitting the ball at those spots. That season, his initial target was 20 goals. I told him he should be aiming for 40. He said, 'Woah, hold on a minute.' But I said, 'Look, previously you haven't intensively worked on finishing, but now you can explode.' He'd reached 30 goals by the end of January, and ended up with 42 in total."

HEADERS

"He loves to head. He always has done – the way he attacks the ball, he can hang, he gets the leap right. He's also extremely brave. Cristiano doesn't mind getting hurt – the only thing that matters is winning and scoring goals. He would always do extra heading, extra finishing. Most of the squad would do extra things – defenders practising quick footwork, midfielders doing long passes. Cristiano always worked with someone else or off on his own. He could entertain himself on his own easily for half an hour heading balls."

FREE KICKS

"If you look at how he'd taken kicks before United, he had the same number of steps backwards as now, but he had a very straight approach. If you try to hit the ball straight-on with your laces, it's harder – and you can damage your ligaments if you catch the floor. We told him to take a step sideways first because your approach means you get your in step involved as well as your laces. It gives bend and that 'up and down' effect. But the magic, of course, is all down to him." **FHM**



RENE SAYS MANCHESTER UNITED TAUGHT RONALDO THE SKILLS TO BECOME THE WORLD'S GREATEST PLAYER, WORKING ON HIS BODY LANGUAGE, GOAL SCORING, HEADERS AND FREE KICKS IN TRAINING

TOK RIF





YO T

IS JAPAN'S BIGGEST YAKUZA GANG PREPARING FOR WAR?

In August, the Yamaguchi clan split in two, sparking fears of a violent turf war. Japan-based journalist Justin McCurry investigates what this means for Japan

Soon after he became head of Japan's most powerful crime syndicate in 2005, Shinobu Tsukasa left the safety of his base in the western port city of Kobe and travelled to Tokyo, then considered enemy territory. He preferred to travel by train than in a chauffeur-driven car; on his arrival in the capital he ate a simple bowl of noodles rather than attend a lavish banquet arranged in his honour.

Despite the show of humility, Tsukasa's record demanded that he be taken seriously as a crime boss. He had spent 13 years in prison for killing a rival with a samurai sword in the '70s and not long after he became boss of the Yamaguchi-gumi – Japan's biggest yakuza group – he went back behind bars, this time for possession of firearms.

Before his release in 2011, Tsukasa hatched ambitious plans for the Yamaguchi-gumi, a supremely wealthy, and occasionally violent, organisation comprising more than

YAKUZA GANG FEUD

70 factions and a membership that accounts for about half of Japan's total gangster population. Under his leadership, the gang would expand its influence beyond western and central Japan, right into the heart of Tokyo.

But now, 10 years after his rise to the apex of Japan's underworld, Tsukasa and the Yamaguchi-gumi are facing their biggest challenge in decades – and one that could herald a dangerous and unpredictable new era for the country's crime syndicates.

The Yamaguchi-gumi, whose membership is estimated at over 23,000, has marked its 100th year with an internal conflict that police fear could lead to a violent turf war played out on the streets of Japan's major cities. In the biggest mob schism for three decades, as many as 2,000 men have left the parent organisation to form a rival gang, after relations with Tsukasa broke down beyond repair.

The roots of the rebellion lie in accusations that Tsukasa had unfairly favoured members of Kodo-kai, a Yamaguchi-gumi affiliate he had founded in the central city of Nagoya in 1984. The final straw, according

to yakuza watchers, was his decision to appoint a fellow Kodo-kai member as his second-in-command, breaking with the long tradition of sharing senior positions among men from different factions. The focus on Nagoya and Tokyo was considered a betrayal of the gang's western Japan heartland. The following years saw the rival groups engage in bloodthirsty warfare marked by assassinations, attempted bombings and gun battles that terrified and captured the nation in equal measure.

But Hiroki Allen, a Tokyo-based finance and security consultant, says the split was mainly about money – the lifeblood of any successful yakuza gang. "The Kodo-kai was filling all the power slots and sending all of the money to their associates, and that didn't sit well at all with other guys in the Yamaguchi-gumi," he says.

Allen's analysis is backed up by a former gang member, who left the Yamaguchi-gumi several years ago. "I understand the frustration of the group that broke away, but it's heresy in our world. If the gang leader says a passing crow is white, it's white," he says.

"The dues were high and the awarding of positions unfair. But that's not enough to lead a rebellion. In the end, it's all about money. The yakuza that broke away weren't earning enough to feel like the high dues were justified, and they are trying to lure others away by offering cheaper dues. It's not very noble. It's not very honourable. But it hasn't been about honour for decades."

GOLDMAN SACHS WITH GUNS

The modern-day obsession with money stretches back to the yakuza's beginnings in the Edo period (1603-1868), when hawkers and gamblers joined forces to form gangs and mark out their territory. The word yakuza itself has close associations with gambling: ya-ku-za, or 8-9-3, is a losing hand in hanafuda, a Japanese card game.

Their heyday came after the end of World War II, when they cashed in on a burgeoning black market while the country attempted to rise from the



BOSS MAN: SHINOBU TSUKASA
ARRIVING AT KOBE STATION AFTER
HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON IN 2011

"The chances of a turf war on Japan's streets are low... until blood is actually spilled. Then it's a chain reaction"

JAKE ADELSTEIN, YAKUZA
EXPERT AND AUTHOR



THUG LIFE: (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) THE YAMAGUCHI-GUMI ATTEND A FUNERAL IN THE '80S; MEMBERS PROUDLY DISPLAY AFFILIATIONS; POLICE STORM THE HOME OF A VIOLENT YAKUZA BOSS; YAKUZA BODY ART



ashes of defeat. Conservative politicians enlisted them in droves to break up unions and left-wing groups, amid fears that Japan could turn to communism. By the boom years of the '60s, the yakuza's total membership stood at more than 180,000.

From its humble origins as a group of men who dispatched labourers and resolved disputes with dockworkers in early 20th century Kobe, the Yamaguchi-gumi has accumulated enormous power and influence. A recent estimate put its wealth at six billion US dollars, making it twice as rich as Sinaloa, Mexico's biggest drug cartel, and second only to Russia's feared Solntsevskaya Bratva in the crime-gang revenue rankings. Yakuza experts are not exaggerating when they refer to the Yamaguchi-gumi as "Goldman Sachs with guns".

As news of this summer's internecine strife seeped into the

mainstream media, fears rose that Japan was about to witness a repeat of the violence that followed the Yamaguchi-gumi's last big split, in the mid-'80s. In a turf war lasting several years, 29 members of the Yamaguchi-gumi and its ally-turned-enemy were killed. Dozens were injured and there were hundreds of gang-member arrests. By the time the guns fell silent, three innocent bystanders and a police officer were also among the dead.

In a country where there were just six reported gun-related deaths last year, the prospect of violence has alarmed law enforcement officials. In response, police officers have stepped up patrols near yakuza headquarters in Kobe and Nagoya, and raided gang premises for crimes ranging from assault to fraud.

Seasoned yakuza watchers say a major outbreak of violence is still

unlikely, but they don't rule it out. "The chances are low... until blood is actually spilled," says Jake Adelstein, the American author of *Tokyo Vice* and a former crime reporter for the Japanese newspaper *The Yomiuri Shimbun*. "Then it's a chain reaction."

Allen, meanwhile, believes a turf war would effectively finish off the yakuza as a serious organisation. "If they did that they know that the whole organisation could be taken down," he says. "Everyone would be arrested, including the top leaders. The police have already warned them: don't go down that road, or we will crush you. In any case today's yakuza see themselves as businessmen, so why would they do anything to put their business at risk?"

After all, spilled blood, especially if it belongs to an innocent bystander, is bad for business. And in Japan, organised crime is big business.

YAKUZA GANG FEUD

The yakuza operate with an openness that would shock people in other countries, where crime syndicates operate in the shadows – until a bombing or high-profile shooting makes the news. In Japan, members proudly display their affiliations by wearing lapel badges and carrying business cards. Most Japanese citizens are content to tolerate gangsters in their midst, as long as the violence does not spill over into the civilian population.

Despite their fearsome reputation, older gangsters prefer to see themselves as chivalrous men with philanthropic intentions. Witness their involvement in distributing bottled water to survivors of the Kobe earthquake in January 1995 and trucking aid to Japan's northeast coast after the tsunami disaster in March 2011.

"It's not that the yakuza are accepted, more that your average

Japanese citizen has no defence against them," says Allen. "The gangsters have weapons, but Japanese citizens are unarmed – they have no way of fighting back. The deal between the yakuza and the police means the gangs keep the peace and discourage petty crime, and in return the police tend to leave them alone."

ON THE VERGE OF VIOLENCE

While the yakuza still depend on established cash cows such as prostitution, human trafficking, protection rackets and loan-sharking, the more astute gangs have moved into legitimate areas of the economy, notably construction, real estate and even the entertainment industry. One group reportedly hires university graduates to sit in an office all day trading on the stock market.

And while high-profile politicians and lawyers in Italy have paid for

their anti-Mafia crusades with their lives, it is hard to find anyone in Japan prepared to commit resources to defeating the yakuza. "Name one politician in Japan who made it a political point to try to get rid of the yakuza," says Adelstein. "The current prime minister hasn't said a word about them, as far as I can tell. If no civilians die in a yakuza conflict, then the public will continue to tolerate them, more or less."

There is no guarantee of that, though. With known yakuza members facing greater police scrutiny, they have started outsourcing violence to smaller gangs whose members are willing to do their dirty work for them in exchange for cash.

"The yakuza have more of a hands-off approach to crime," says Mark Schreiber, author of *Shocking Crimes Of Postwar Japan* and a veteran yakuza watcher. "They're farming violence out to these gangs,

RUN THIS TOWN: NEARLY-NAKED TATTOOED YAKUZA MEMBERS CARRY A SHRINE THROUGH THE STREETS DURING A JAPANESE FESTIVAL



“The yakuza are farming violence out to smaller gangs, who are harder for police to identify because they don’t have tattoos or a missing pinkie”

MARK SCHREIBER, YAKUZA
EXPERT AND AUTHOR

who are harder for the police to identify... after all, they don't have tattoos or a missing pinkie.” This is a reference to yubitsume, the practice of cutting off one's own little finger to atone for a mistake or unpaid debt.

A frenzied round of violence would effectively mean suicide for everyone involved, says a writer who covers organised crime for a Japanese weekly magazine. The writer, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals, predicted that Yamaguchi-gumi mobsters would keep their powder dry... for now.

“What those guys who led the split did was unforgivable in yakuza circles,” he says. “They know that, but they’re saying to the Yamaguchi-gumi, ‘OK, so what are you going to do about it?’ If they push it far enough, there could be retaliation. At the same time, no one wants to give the police an excuse to crack down on them.”

Despite predictions of bloodshed, all is quiet in the yakuza heartlands. That could mean that cooler heads are prevailing, but it's also a sign that society is growing less tolerant.

After decades of operating with near-impunity, gang members are finally starting to feel the heat. Senior bosses can now be held criminally responsible for misdemeanours committed by their underlings – from carrying firearms to non-payment of a bar bill. As a result, membership has fallen, from 80,900 in 2009 to 53,500 at the end of last year.

WESTERN RUN-INS

Japanese authorities have also moved to sever ties between organised crime and the legitimate businesses that support them. Any company that knowingly works in tandem with the yakuza – from decorating their offices to printing their business cards – will be publicly

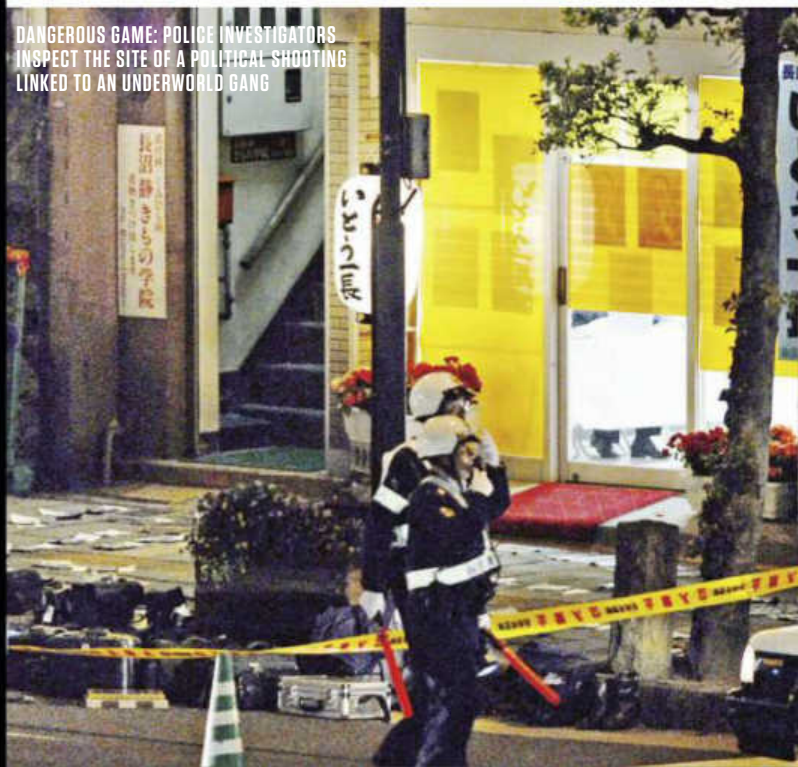
named and shamed. Repeat offenders face fines of up to 500,000 yen, and company executives can be jailed for up to a year.

Even the yakuza's attempts to shift their focus across the Pacific have run into trouble. In 2012, the US treasury department froze Yamaguchi-gumi assets that had been squirrelled away Stateside, a far bolder move than any taken by the Japanese authorities.

Still, for peace to prevail the yakuza will have to overcome their predilection for violence, particularly when their honour is at stake. Where wider Japanese society prefers compromise, the yakuza are guided by a different credo: jaku niku kyo shoku – the weak are meat; the strong eat.

“The yakuza resolve problems quickly because they can take vicious and decisive action,” says Schreiber. “They’re like the guys in Westerns who take out the bad guys... and everyone lives happily ever after.”

DANGEROUS GAME: POLICE INVESTIGATORS INSPECT THE SITE OF A POLITICAL SHOOTING LINKED TO AN UNDERWORLD GANG



SCARRRED FOR LIFE

Frowned upon by polite society, tattoos are a sign of bravery and honour to the yakuza

Central to the yakuza are the incredible tattoos of its members. Even though the designs are distinctive enough on their own, gang members are even more marked out as very few Japanese people have tattoos.

Ian Flower of New Skool Tattoos in Epsom has been creating Japanese tattoo artwork for more than 20 years. He says tattoo culture in Japan is unique. "If you're tattooed in Japan everyone assumes you're in a gang – it's extremely frowned upon. I have a Japanese client who can't go into the ordinary bath-houses because they think he's gang-affiliated. He then has to go in a gang-friendly one – everyone there has a full tattoo bodysuit and stares at you as you come in. They will be looking at your tattoos to see what affiliations you have."

However, the attachment between the yakuza and tattooing is under some debate. Traditionally, slaves and prisoners were tattooed in Japan to denote their owner or the crimes they had committed, but some scholars suggest tattoos were actually popularised by wealthy traders who were banned from flaunting their worth in conservative regimes. Also, says Flower, the yakuza weren't the earliest adopters of tattoos. "Before the yakuza started getting them, it was only firemen who had tattoos in Japan – possibly in case they were killed at work so they'd be able to be identified, as well as for spiritual protection and good luck."

The means the yakuza use to create tattoos – called irezumi – is



also unique. It's an extremely painful method where a brush of needles is forcibly jabbed under the skin, and is far more time-consuming than using a standard needle gun. An irezumi body suit is therefore a way of proving courage and also personal success, as each piece is expensive to produce.

As for the designs, Flower says, "The Edo period popularised characters from fantasy stories. The authorities at the time banned any mention of the world outside of Japan, meaning literature was very limited. Therefore, rebels smuggled in tales in the form of paintings made using carved wooden blocks, giving the tattoo designs you see today."

To blend in with everyday life, yakuza ensure their wrists, necks and shirt lines are free of ink so they can hide their designs under clothes. That said, showing your tattoos in Japan can land unwitting tourists in trouble, says Flower. "When I was in Japan we bumped into some yakuza who saw my own designs and eyeballed us for ages. Thankfully, we were later joined by some local members who showed them we were OK. Tattooing is a very serious business out there." **FHM**

TOKYO INK: GANG MEMBERS DISPLAY THEIR TATTOOS AT A FESTIVAL IN THE CAPITAL, AND (LEFT) TATTOOIST IAN FLOWER AT WORK





**“Yakuza
ensure their
wrists, necks
and shirt
lines are ink-
free so they
can blend in”**

Throne of Games

The new generation of rockstars don't play instruments, they play computer games. And thanks to their YouTube videos, they're idols to millions of kids...

Backstage at London's Alexandra Palace is a sacred place. Its corridors from the green room to the main stage are lined with photos of the legends who've played here: Led Zeppelin, Morrissey, The Who, The Stone Roses, The Rolling Stones – they're all there, in all their era-defining, cock-thrusting glory. But today, we're here to see a very different kind of superstar – and his name is Calfreezy. ■





This guy is just 20, but he has two million YouTube subscribers who watch him play computer games*
*and he's not even very good at them

WORDS: CHRIS SAYER. PHOTOGRAPHY: TOM MARTIN. ILLUSTRATION: MARK AT PARK GRANDE

The crowd is screaming and the stage is set. But this fresh-faced 20-year-old is not about to rock out like Mick Jagger; he won't even break a sweat. Instead, he will be sitting on a Chesterfield armchair, in front of a screen, wearing tracksuit bottoms and a hoodie. He doesn't even play any musical instruments... he plays video games.

Rewind to 9am, and *FHM* is driving up to Alexandra Palace as crowds of kids – all black skinny jeans, Nike trainers and Belieber quiffs – stomp up the hill to begin a day at video game event Legends Of Gaming. Most of the kids are dragging their parents behind them. All of them have paid at least £22 a ticket to be there. A handful have even coughed up £120 for VIP passes, which get you into a special viewing area, a goodie bag that contains a paper hat with the words 'I Am Bread' (the title of an action-adventure computer game where you play a piece of bread trying to become toast) emblazoned on the front, and access to a VIP lounge complete with free tea, coffee and energy drinks. But the real reason they've splashed so much cash on these special passes isn't the caffeine. It's the chance to meet their idols, the seven superstars everyone is here to catch a glimpse of: YouTube gaming 'legends' Ali-A, Syndicate, DanTDM, AshleyMarree, Wroetoshaw, TWiINSANE and Calfreezy. Forget The Roses and The Who... these guys are the rock 'n' roll stars of the future.

"My son was physically shaking when we walked in," one mum tells us after we step through the ticket barriers. "We've come all the way from South Wales to be here. It's his birthday, and all he wants to do is see these YouTubers in real life."

Looking up at us, the kid in question nods. "Syndicate is my favourite. I love him," he tells us.

"Do you want to be like Syndicate when you grow up?" we ask.

"Oh yeah! Being like Syndicate would be well cool." It's a sentiment repeated over and over again by all the

"One kid was physically shaking with excitement walking in"



ABOVE AND RIGHT: ENTHUSIASTS RANGE FROM FULL-GROWN CAMERAMEN TO FAMILIES. BUT REALLY, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS

4ft-tall fan boys we ask this morning, as they run wild through the building. We chat to 12-year-old Charlie, flanked by his 18-year-old brother Hugo. "I love Calfreezy," says Charlie. "I watch all his videos because of the way he plays." His older sibling, however, shrugs the same question off. "I've heard of him," he says. "But I've got better things to do than watch YouTube gamers. I'm more of a TV guy."

What's the hype?

In case you're not a 12-year-old in a paper bread hat, then all you need to know is that these 'legends' are a game-playing, audience-grabbing, money-making phenomenon. They don't deal in the hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands. The figures you use when describing these young adults are in the multimillions. And *billions*.

Case in point: Syndicate, a blue-haired 22-year-old Mancunian, real name Tom Cassell. He commands an audience of nine million fans, all subscribed to his YouTube channel, ready and waiting to catch the next video of him screaming through video gameplay or vlogging his day-to-day life (be it eating chillies, sky diving, or driving a white Ford Mustang around America). Combined, his videos have been watched in excess of 1.5 billion times. With the advertising revenue that comes with hitting these insane numbers, he's just designed and built his own £1,000,000 luxury home.

It soon becomes obvious that we're not going to get to the bottom of why so many kids are obsessed with watching these YouTubers just by speaking to their fans. Their responses don't get us anywhere: "He's just really cool", "I dunno – he's funny" and "I just love him" being among the responses from the kids we ask. In search of the answer, we head backstage to see the video game 'legends' in the flesh. »





"I've got no idea what I'm about to play," says Calfreezy. "I've got a schedule, but I've not read it. All I know is I'm on any minute now." He looks exactly like his fans, just a bit taller. The only thing that gives him away as 'one of them' is his feet – he's rocking a pair of sold-out-globally grey Kanye West x Adidas Yeezy Boost 350s. If you want a pair, get ready to cough up around \$1,000 on eBay for them. "These? Yeah, I've ordered a pair in black too," he tells us, as he's guided out of the green room and to the stage. For now, 120 seconds is all we're allowed with him. But he's promised we'll meet again later.

As we peel off to head into the arena filled with merchandise, eye-meltingly bright stalls with hands-on sessions of the latest video games and 20ft faces of the 'legends' glaring down from huge banners, we try once more to get some knowledge from a fan on what the bloody hell this is all about.

"What one thing would you like us to tell Calfreezy for you?"

"One thing? So cool! I'd ask him if he could sign... No, wait, can you ask him if I can come live with him?" says the little guy, his eyes not moving from the stage where Calfreezy is now trying to KO Pikachu with a flaming hammer-type thing in *Super Smash Bros* in front of an ocean of spectators.

It seems like a breakthrough moment in trying to understand this whole thing. These kids don't want to be their heroes – what they really want is to be a part of their heroes' lives and live alongside them, as a part of the lunacy.

Keeping a connection

Once you've seen Calfreezy 'at work', it's not hard to see why. He rolls around his new flat with his housemates and fellow YouTubers on 'Swegways' (think mini handlebar-less Segways, but "with more swag"); he drives a pimped-out all-black Range Rover; he pranks his pals by cling-filming everything they own; he screams and shouts like a child after 10 kilos of fizzy cola bottles, and he plays video games all day. Hitting play on one of his YouTube videos is like

LEFT: FANS WANT TO BE A PART OF THEIR IDOLS' WORLD

BELOW: CALFREEZY IS LIKE A COOL OLDER BROTHER



"Kids don't see gamers as celebs – they're like their friends"

opening the bedroom door of your way cooler, funnier, incredibly successful big brother.

But what do we know? Two hours ago, we'd never even heard of a 'Swegway'. "I think now, ultimately, personality sells," says Tom Greenwood-Mears, the event director of Legends Of Gaming. "These YouTube personalities, and the relationship they allow their fans to have with them – that's what's selling. These guys connect with their audience in a new and very deep way. That's why they're so successful, that's why they have millions of subscribers and they're flying around the world, being courted by massive companies, massive brands. It's a great thing, actually – it's about the return of the nice guy."

For Jonathan Edwards, UK marketing executive for Konami (at the event to show off *Metal Gear Solid V* and the latest *Pro Evolution Soccer*), signing up YouTubers to help peddle the next big video game is more than just enlisting the help of a celebrity. "The younger generations genuinely see these guys as friends. They have that aura of a celebrity about them, but coupling that with the accessibility of entering their lives by hitting 'play', there's actually a friendly relationship built up there. Most of these kids here today are watching YouTube in their bedrooms. These YouTubers are all still filming from their bedrooms, too. Even us old guys would be able to relate to that. Who would you rather have recommend a video game to you: a celebrity, or a trusted friend? They're sort of both. That's why I wouldn't really call them celebrities. It's more than that. They're influencers."

We're not alone in not quite getting the obsession with watching someone else play video games on YouTube. In August, on his American chat show, Jimmy Kimmel described YouTube Gaming (YouTube's new platform dedicated solely to

watching the likes of Calfreezy) as like "going to a restaurant and having someone else eat your food for you", before unloading a torrent of fun poking at the gaming community. That went out live to approximately two million Americans. Calfreezy, who's back in front of us and chowing his roast chicken lunch, has stacks of videos with views twice that figure.

"I had weird thoughts about the Kimmel thing," he says, sounding far more world-weary than his 20 years would imply. "I understand that that's the way a lot of people think about YouTube, and I get that people his age only watch traditional TV. But he was laughing at what is now becoming the biggest viewing platform on the planet. The ratings on his show are nowhere near what YouTube pulls in and, in a way, it was a little bit strange: this guy is almost laughing at the thing that's taking his job, as harsh as that sounds."

Watching other people play video games is not quite as new as you'd imagine. In the 1990s, Channel 4's *GamesMaster* show featured kids playing against each other before a live audience, while the first Nintendo World Championships launched in 1990. What makes this current incarnation of celebrity players such a big deal is the near-unlimited numbers of people their content can reach.

YouTube mania

Before he was Calfreezy, Callum Airey was born in London in 1995, but due to his father's job in the oil industry lived in Vietnam, Russia, Scotland and Egypt. This continent-hopping is the reason for his indefinable accent. At 15, he began to film himself playing *Call Of Duty*, dragging two of his mates along to help because he was too nervous to do it alone. It took him forever to get subscribers, he says, but driven to persevere purely because he enjoyed making videos, things

slowly started to change. Three years on, he reached a milestone 150,000 subscribers, which meant he could earn enough money from his YouTube channel to pay his rent. Now, in 2015, things have changed again. It feels like sacrilege comparing it to the Beatlemania of the 1960s, but... well, judge for yourself.

"I've just got back from a trip to Aya Napa with a group of my YouTube friends. That holiday was the first time something really crazy happened. We got off the plane and around 40 fans were waiting for us. One guy told us he'd seen a Snapchat of the plane and used it to research what time it was due to land. Then, the second

morning in our villa, I was woken up by fans screaming our names. I asked one of them how they'd found us because we were really far out of town. They said they'd seen pictures we'd posted on social media and tracked it down by matching them to a photo on Trip Advisor. When I started making videos, I never thought it would come to this."

Speaking to Calfreezy, we can't dispute Legend Of Gaming organiser Tom's opinion of these famous YouTubers being 'nice guys'. Cal's pretty much allowed his food to go cold without a single moan while answering our questions; he holds doors open for

anyone walking behind him; he minds his Ps and Qs, and shakes hands. But, here's the thing that's really, *really* bothering us. We'll be damned if 'being nice' in 2015 is the sole reason for earning millions, travelling the world and being called someone's hero. We're nice guys. We're all nice guys. It's hard not to

IS IT SACRILEGE TO COMPARE ALL THIS TO BEATLEMANIA?



"You are never too old to become a successful YouTuber"

“TV presenters who poke fun at online gaming are basically laughing at what’s taking their jobs”

feel a fire of anger in our bellies and ask: why hasn't this happened to me? Why aren't I stinking rich too? Why don't I have a fucking Swegway? But the short of it is, it can still happen to you.

“I honestly want to die inside when people tell me, ‘Oh, I’m too old to be a YouTuber now,’” says Calfreezy. “That’s not how it works. I’ve seen it work for 45-year-old guys who just chat football all day. I’m telling you, no matter what you’re into, be it analysing sport or talking science or whatever, there is an audience. You just need to find a new way of doing it. It’ll be hard work – I’ve not had a traditional ‘day off’ in about four years – but what job isn’t like that? Find your subject, find your USP and persist until you’ve found your audience.”

Skill isn’t everything

Our time at this digital circus is almost up. Are we any closer to understanding the appeal of YouTube gaming? Maybe. We do know it’s got very little to do with gaming. In fact, perhaps the most startling revelation is that Calfreezy *really sucks* at video games. Along with thousands of obsessed fans, we witnessed him get ‘owned’, big time, by hand-picked members of the crowd lucky enough to play alongside their hero. They weren’t just better than him. They absolutely decimated him in every session of *Smash Bros* we saw him play.

No, the appeal of these YouTube influencers isn’t based on skill. The ‘legends’ are the bigger, cooler kids at the back seat of the school bus we all looked up to on the first day of term. They’re the older brothers that showed you your first 18-rated horror film without your parents knowing. They’re the icons these kids look up to, act like, look to for advice, and hang out with through a screen. They’re like our traditional heroes, but heroes that actually *speak* to you.

Will there ever be a photo of Calfreezy and co hanging on the walls among that short walk of icons backstage at Alexandra Palace, alongside the talents that are Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones and Morrissey? Possibly. But then, these future adults don’t need a stage to get close to their heroes – and they sure as hell won’t need one in the future. All they need is a high-speed broadband connection, a ‘play’ button... and a healthy disregard for terrestrial TV. **FHM**

WHO OWNS THE INTERNET?

They’re more famous online than Tom Cruise or Leonardo DiCaprio. But do you know who they are?

NAME: SYNDICATE
REAL NAME:

Tom Cassell

AGE: 22

FROM: Manchester

SUBSCRIBERS:

9,203,457

CLAIM TO FAME:

Syndicate came to prominence playing *Call Of Duty* and *Minecraft*, and now



partakes in a variety of online gaming challenges.

NAME: DANTDM

REAL NAME:

Daniel Middleton

AGE: 23

FROM:

Northamptonshire

SUBSCRIBERS:

7,935,936

CLAIM TO FAME:

The TDM is an abbreviation of ‘The Diamond *Minecraft*’, and Daniel’s channel is a one-stop shop for the blocky build-’em-



up. Watch him smash it, along with thousands of others.

NAME: ALI-A

REAL NAME:

Alastair Aiken

AGE: 21

FROM: London

SUBSCRIBERS:

6,723,244

CLAIM TO FAME:

The number-one *Call Of Duty* aficionado, Ali-A is an upbeat one



to watch for fans of the hugely popular shooter.

NAME:

WROETOSHAW

REAL NAME:

Harry Lewis

AGE: 18

FROM: Guernsey

SUBSCRIBERS:

5,062,955

CLAIM TO FAME:

Mainly focuses on *FIFA*, and is the youngest member



of the popular YouTube troupe The Sidemen.

NAME: ASHLEY

MARIEE

REAL NAME:

Ashley Mariee

AGE: 19

FROM: Cyprus (now lives in Cheltenham)

SUBSCRIBERS:

619,066

CLAIM TO FAME:

A big *Minecraft* player like DanTDM,



with a few vlogs and the odd ‘Let’s Play’ thrown in.

FIGHT



NG FIT

Straight from the octagon to your heart,
it's UFC's secret weapon: Carly Baker

Words: Andrew Lowry
Photography: Nigel Crane




The Ultimate Fighting Championship is one of the most punishing sporting spectacles around. Cannily, though, the masterminds behind the violence sugar the pill with the Octagon Girls: an international troupe of motivators who also happen to look like Kate Upton's better-looking sisters.

And flying the flag for Britain among the girls? Step forward the gym-loving, fish-and-chip-eating Miss Carly Baker...

Hi Carly! Before UFC, you used to be in a girl group. Details, please.

It was a cheesy group called Mynxters – we did a song for Hello Kitty back in the day. Then I was in another one called SW1, which was weird because none of us were from that postcode in London. »



A full-page photograph of Carly Baker. She is a blonde woman with long, wavy hair, wearing a white, loose-fitting tank top over a black bra. She is posing with her left hand on her hip and her right hand near her face, looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light grey.

CARLY BAKER

**'WE'RE ALL LIKE
ONE BIG FAMILY
— THE FIGHTERS
ARE ALL TOTAL
GENTLEMEN'**



Were you the Beyoncé of that group?

Nope, I couldn't sing. I loved it, and we got to work with some amazing people, from Kasabian to Gary Barlow, but I can't hold a note. I was just the blonde that could dance and mime well.

Do you remember all your dance routines?

Oh yes – is that really sad?

No. Yes. Anyway, do you bust them out in a club?

I don't know if people could handle the Hello Kitty routine – they'd be like, "Who is this girl? Is she crazy?" That should actually be my party trick.

How did you go from cheesy-pop to UFC Octagon Girl?

I auditioned for it like any other job. I'd always been a fan.

How was your first bout?

Watching the fights as a ring girl is great. You've got the best seats in the house. It's amazing when the fighters come in – the place goes up. I knew people loved it, but they just go *mental*. The atmosphere is incredible.

Do you get to hang out with the fighters at all?

We're like a big happy family – they're all total gentlemen. Then they get into the octagon and this different side comes out. They're all so disciplined and focused – it's inspirational.

And they're all massive rivals – do you get competitive with the other Octagon Girls?

No! We have Brazilians, Americans, Mexicans and me, the only Brit – it's like a mini-UN and we all get on well.

That's pretty boring.


We're all on top of each other in the changing rooms. If there was any bitchiness it wouldn't be a very nice place.

Are you ever tempted to go into battle yourself?

What, like Ronda Rousey?

You could take her, right?

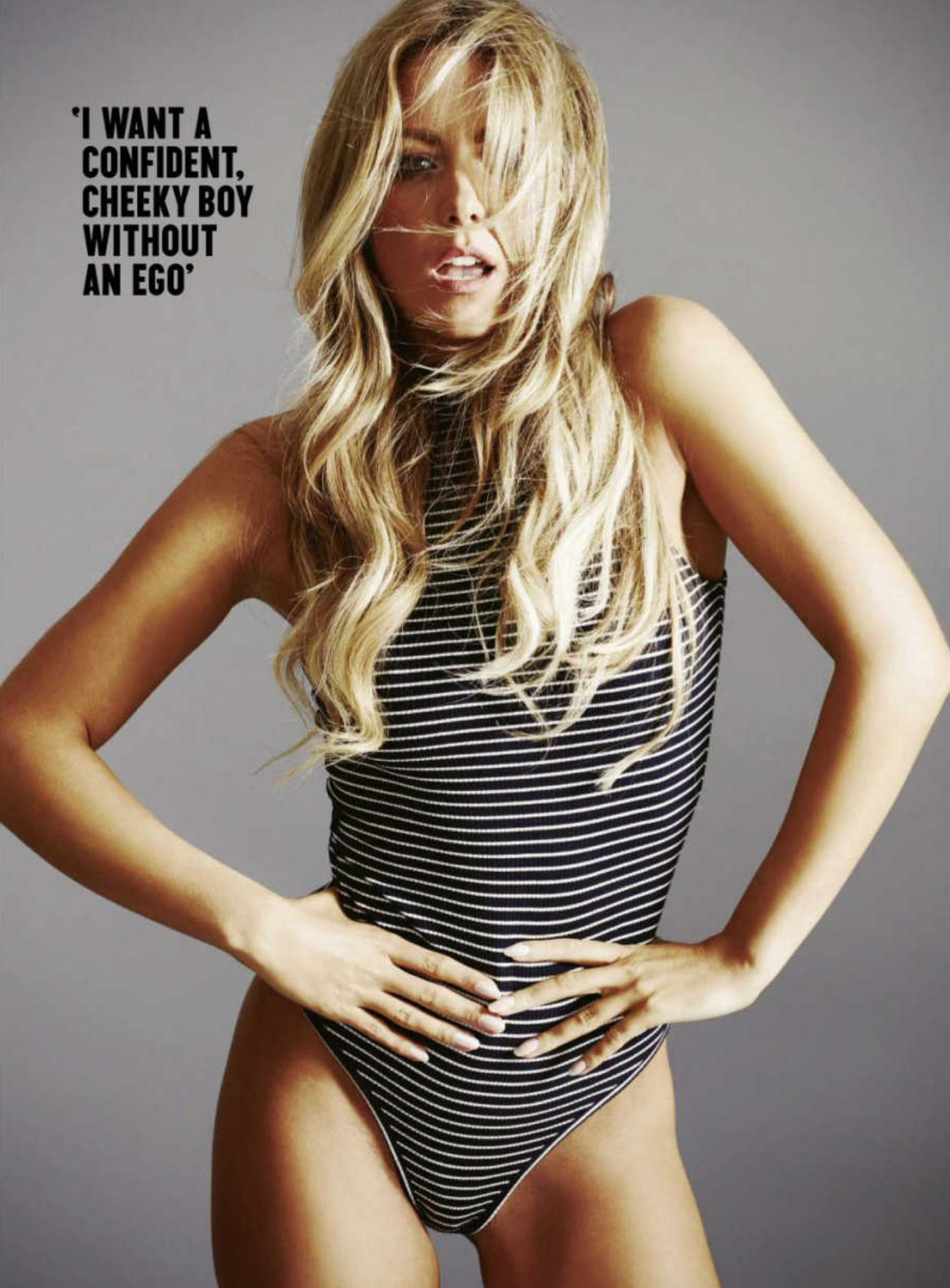
I don't think anybody could »

A full-page photograph of Carly Baker. She is crouching low to the ground, facing slightly to the left but looking back over her shoulder towards the camera. Her hands are clasped together near her face, with her fingers spread. She has long, wavy blonde hair. She is wearing a dark blue or black one-piece swimsuit with thin white horizontal stripes. On her feet are black high-heeled sandals with multiple straps. The background is a plain, light grey studio backdrop.

CARLY BAKER

**'UFC IS AMAZING.
THE FANS JUST
GO MENTAL – THE
PLACE GOES UP'**

**'I WANT A
CONFIDENT,
CHEEKY BOY
WITHOUT
AN EGO'**



do that! I pretended to be taking up fighting for April Fools' Day a while ago. We shot a video and people bought it – more than I thought.

But I don't really want to get my face smashed in, what with how I make a living.

Some UFC girls have posed for *Playboy*. Would you?

I wouldn't say no – who could turn Hugh Hefner down? But I'd have to give it a think.

UFC's really exploded over the past few years – what do you think is its secret?

The guys are in perfect shape, and they've had to master all these different disciplines. It's not like most sports where you only need to get good at one thing – it's loads of stuff all mixed together. Throw in the razzmatazz, and it's an awesome package. It's the most exciting thing out there.

Where's the best place you've been to with it?

I loved Abu Dhabi, and Las Vegas is amazing.

Did you hit the tables?

You have to, don't you? I didn't win, though. I lost at Ascot too. I have no luck, ever.

You have a sideline in personal training – have you got any fitness tips?

It's just about putting the time in and training smart. There aren't any shortcuts, I'm afraid. I do a lot of boxing for my cardio. I love it.

You must get a lot of guys coming up to you in the gym – the one we go to is a right meat market...

You do get some who stare in the mirror and flex. They're idiots – they're the ones who come over and ask you out. Which I don't understand – I'm not exactly looking my best!

Where are you in the great mirror selfie debate?

I don't want to see a pic of a bloke posing in the mirror. I like a relaxed guy that's not so into himself.

Are you into 'built' guys?

I like big shoulders, but I like personality too. I want a good heart and a gentleman who wants to hold my hand. I always go for the bad boys, though. I want a confident, cheeky boy without an ego.

How about the moon on a stick as well?

Ha ha! I've just gone out with guys that are all about themselves. But I'm not into guys that care too much about that stuff. All they eat is chicken and protein shakes.

After appearing in those ads for Coral, do a lot of guys ask you for betting tips?

I'm in a chip van in the ads, so people ask me for haddock and chips, salt and vinegar, onion rings, everything. I may as well work in an actual chip van. I think I'd like to, actually – I just laugh my head off the entire time when we're filming them.

So you've caught the acting bug then?

Definitely. I fell into it but I'm liking it more and more. I'd love to do a film. I've spoken to a lot of directors – I'd like to make a good British gangster film with Tom Hardy. He's a good-looking lad, isn't he?

Being with Coral, you must have some insider info.

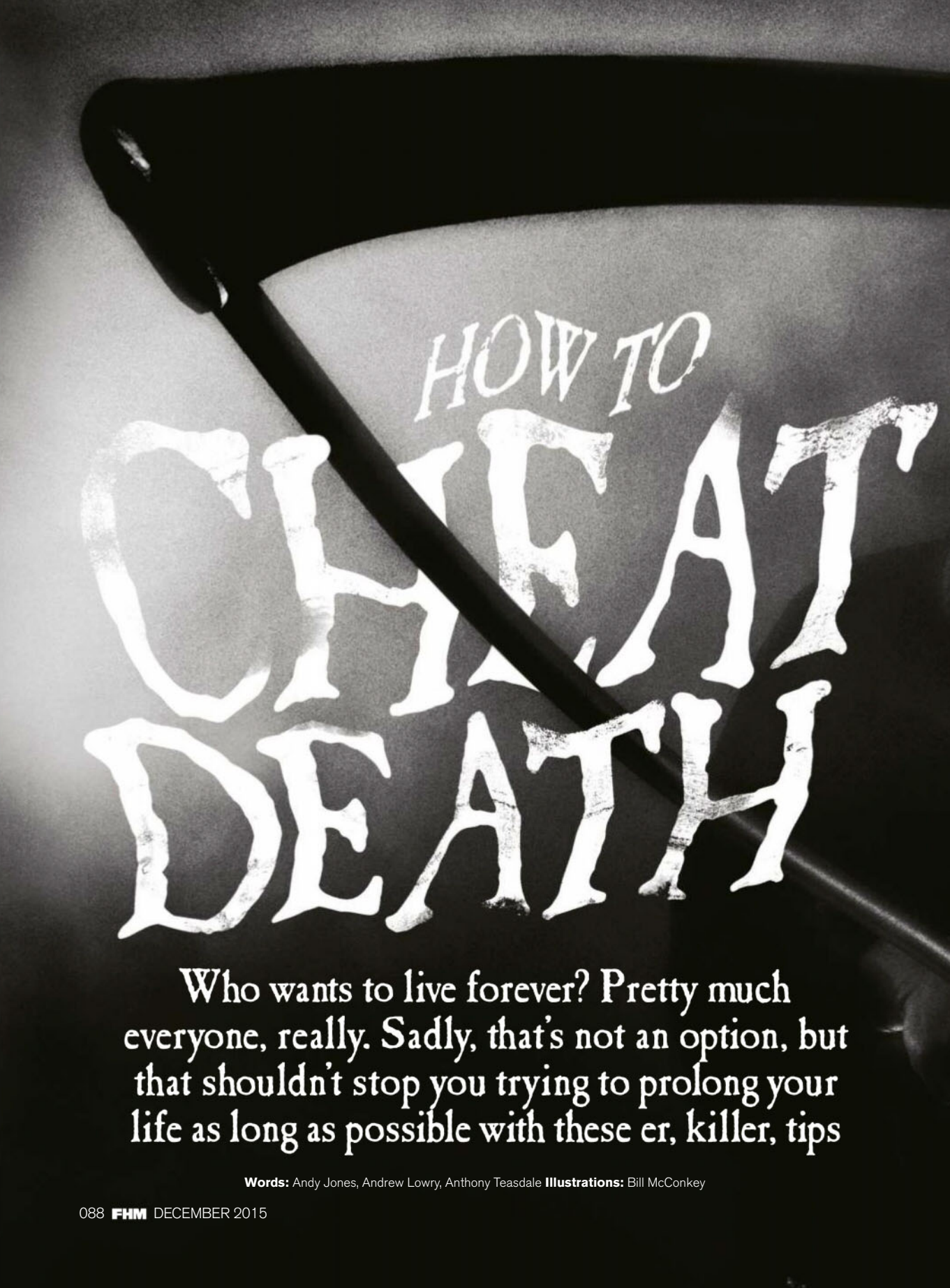
Who's your tip for the Premier League title?

I don't know. Maybe Manchester City?

Great, now you've gone and jinxed them.

Ha ha, I guess I have. To all those City fans out there, I'm deeply sorry. **FHM**





HOW TO CHEAT DEATH

Who wants to live forever? Pretty much everyone, really. Sadly, that's not an option, but that shouldn't stop you trying to prolong your life as long as possible with these er, killer, tips

Words: Andy Jones, Andrew Lowry, Anthony Teasdale **Illustrations:** Bill McConkey



SWERVE A PIRATE ATTACK

Carl Mason, author of *Pirate Hunter*, spent 10 years in the Marines before offering private security to vessels

BE ARMED "Lots of companies store their weapons in a gun platform – essentially a tugboat with a full arsenal. The last ship we had only had four AK-47s and night-vision goggles."

PREPARE THE BOAT "On board every boat we bring a medical kit, distress flares and basic sea safety stuff. Then there's razor wire and a high pressure hose to flood and sink any small crafts. You can also get 'pirate barriers' – L-shaped plastic guards you put on the rails to stop them attaching their grappling hooks."

VET YOUR CREW "The worst pirate attack I faced, the captain was in on it."

DOUBLE YOUR WATCH "Combine radar with a guy watching on the bridge. If you see a blip onscreen that's coasting along at 10 knots then suddenly heads towards you, it's a bad sign."

WARN THE PIRATES "We fire a flare to let them know we've seen them. If they keep coming, we'll raise a weapon. Ask the captain, 'Permission to fire warning shots?', then fire above their heads. If they keep coming, ask 'Permission to engage?'. Then it all kicks off."

DON'T STOP "When pirates attack, they'll fire some shots first at the bridge to get the captain to stop. Don't – go full steam ahead!"

IMPROVISE "On one boat, we made a bazooka out of a scaffolding pipe and a flare. It fired terribly, but it made it look like we were armed."

HAVE A PANIC ROOM "We have a special room that is doubly enforced before we go into pirate waters. If we can't stop the pirates getting on board, we all lock ourselves in there and contact coalition forces." »

Coming...
ready or not



STOP YOURSELF CHOKING TO DEATH

Alan Weir is head of services at St John Ambulance

'If you're alone and you start to choke, keep coughing to dislodge the obstruction. When people are choking, their body loses physical strength, so they can't perform abdominal thrusts on themselves. While there have been anecdotes of people throwing themselves over the back of a chair, it's yet to be medically proven as an effective way to help remove obstructions when choking.'



ESCAPE SOMEONE TRYING TO SHOOT YOU

Someone's pointing a gun at you. Now what? Ex-FBI interrogator Joe Navarro, author of *Dangerous Personalities*, is here to save your life

TURN AWAY "Angle your body away from anyone behaving aggressively. When angered, primate behaviour leads us to confront each other chest to chest. Turn your body away and the blood pressure actually goes down."

DON'T BE A HERO "Don't ever attempt to get the gun away from them. You increase your chances of getting shot, plus you get the hit off the exploding gasses that push a bullet out."

RUN "Most of the time, when people shoot, they miss. If you run, the chances of you getting hit go down ever lower to less than 25%."

DON'T GET IN HIS CAR
"If a guy is pointing a gun at your head and wants you to get in his car, just run away. If you're hit by a bullet, you have a

75% chance of survival if you get to hospital within 40 minutes. Get into his car and you're almost certainly driving away from the hospital."

PLEAD "When you're in a caged situation, plead for your life. You need to mention your mother and children repeatedly. 'Mother' and 'child' carry power like few other words."

PLAY DEAD "If you're hit, play dead. Reports from World War II and Syria show playing dead can help you escape a massacre. Also, if you're hit, playing dead means your heart isn't beating as fast, stemming the blood flow."

AVOID WALLS "Bullets hug the pavement and the wall, as they follow a trajectory. If a killer is firing down a hall and you're against a wall, you're more likely to be hit. If you're in a shoot-out, you're better to run than lie on the floor. Bullets don't bounce like rubber balls – they ricochet."





LIVE FOREVER IN CYBERSPACE

DeadSocial keeps your digital life healthy and glowing long after you're worm food. Creator James Norris takes us through it

"DeadSocial allows people to record a video that's played on their social networking site after they've died, whether that's six months away or 50 years later. We also allow people to send a video to someone on a special date in the future, so a guy who is dying can send his six-year-old daughter a video on her wedding day. We never watch the videos – we believe they're private – but we get feedback from people who eventually receive them telling us they've helped through a deeply difficult time. They say, 'I thought it was stupid when they made it, but now I see how touching it is.' That's a really special thing."

REDUCE STRESS WITH MINDFULNESS

Forget fending off deadlines at work all day long. Use mindfulness – a meditative practice you can incorporate into daily living – to reduce stress, improve sleep and boost your happiness. Life coach Elena Angel gives us a two-step guide to a healthier work mind

1 "Stressful thoughts affect your heart, gut and brain function – 75% of people who experience stress find this causes physical and psychological symptoms. People don't realise that what they think about can physically affect their body, so don't allow every thought to play out into a negative story. You will be calmer, make better decisions and not react badly."

2 "Clear your mind and just make breathing the focus of your attention for even as little as one minute. This is mindfulness, and it can kill stress immediately, whether you're in a traffic jam or stuck on a crowded train."



EAT YOUR WAY INTO OLD AGE

Japan's Okinawa islands are home to the world's longest-living people, with the lowest levels of heart disease and strokes in the world. Just follow their tips and you'll be celebrating your century

FOOD Munch on sweet potatoes, fish, rice, pork and soya products – all foods packed with anti-ageing antioxidants that guard against cancers. Okinawa's residents also feast on locally grown leafy vegetables.

PREPARATION Most meat is boiled not fried – preventing pointless calories – and less salt is added, staving off high blood pressure.

DRINK Green tea is the brew of choice – which can apparently guard against cancer, Alzheimer's, depression and obesity. Fancy that!



SUCCESSFULLY LEAVE A GANG

When you're 13 the idea of a gang – a real gang that does bad stuff – is exciting. The reality is violent and extremely dangerous. Junior Smart of the SOS Project at St Giles Trust (stgilestrust.org.uk), helps young men leave the gang life behind

"Communication is key. When you've made negative lifestyle choices, you want to speak to other people who have a real understanding. I can't just say to the kids, 'Don't carry a knife,' because the young person may, in their view, have a good reason to carry that knife.

"After that, it's really a mentoring process helping them find jobs they can apply for, and building their CVs. Some may not have the habits you need to hold a job down, so at times I get up at stupid o'clock to literally get them out of bed in time for work.

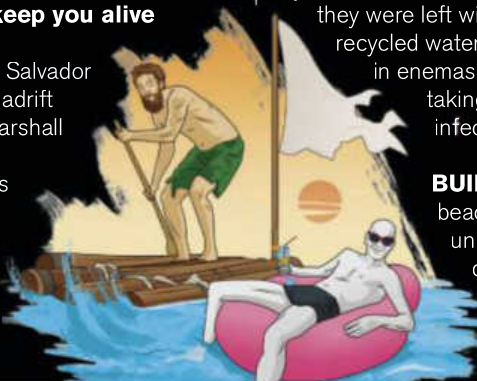
"The most important part is to break down destructive connections. I was working with a kid once who was worried the gang wouldn't let him go. So I found him an old ankle tag that wasn't working, but we switched it on when they came looking for him. He told them he'd been stopped and searched and couldn't come out for four weeks, and they believed it. That gave him a month to build a new routine, going to school and playing football instead of being on the streets."

STAY ALIVE AFTER A SHIPWRECK

Don't just sit there growing a beard and talking to a football as your prepare to cark it. These handy – and frankly disgusting – tips could keep you alive

FIND FOOD Mexican José Salvador Alvarenga spent 13 months adrift before washing up on the Marshall Islands in January 2014. He survived by catching seagulls and drinking turtle blood.

John Wiseman, author of *SAS Survival Guide*, says you can safety-test all foods by rubbing a small amount into your wrist.



KEEP HYDRATED The Robertson family spent 38 days lost at sea after their yacht was attacked by whales. With the boat damaged beyond repair, they were left with a rubber dinghy. They used recycled water from the bottom of the boat in enemas to hydrate themselves, as taking the water anally avoided infection. One to tell the grandkids.

BUILD SHELTER Avoid the beach – flies are rampant, tides are unpredictable and being on the driest part of land on any island will cause you to sweat more quickly. Build your shelter at least 100m inshore.

OUTLIVE A LIFE SENTENCE

Getting handed a life stretch isn't the ideal way to spend the next 20 years – certainly if your idea of fun involves ladies, great telly and not having boiling water thrown in your face. Still, if you're in jail for the next few decades, Larry Levine, the US's only prison consultant (wallstreetprisonconsultants.com), can put you right

MIND YOUR MANNERS "Prison may be a place of criminals, but manners go a long way inside. Don't gossip or sit on someone else's bunk. I've seen guys get nearly beaten to death with a phone receiver for cutting in the queue."

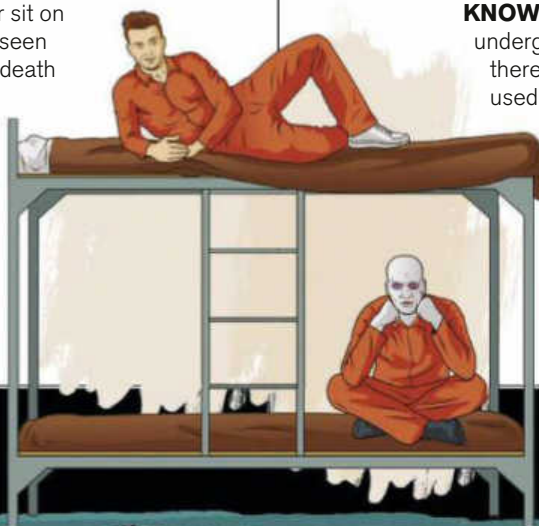
CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS "Prisons have a pecking order. Run into some asshole who was caught with 20 kilos of cocaine yet only got three years and

you know he ratted on someone else. Don't talk to these people or you'll be tainted by association."

BECOME USEFUL "Gang leaders are at the top of the pecking order, but lawyers are only one step below. People will protect you if you can be useful to them and telling people their rights when they think they have none gives you a lot of clout. Having a skill helps – whether it's shining shoes, doing people's laundry or being a decent cook."

KNOW YOUR DOLLAR "In the underground economy of prisons, there's always a currency. It used to be cigarettes, but it can be anything. In one jail it was tins of mackerel."

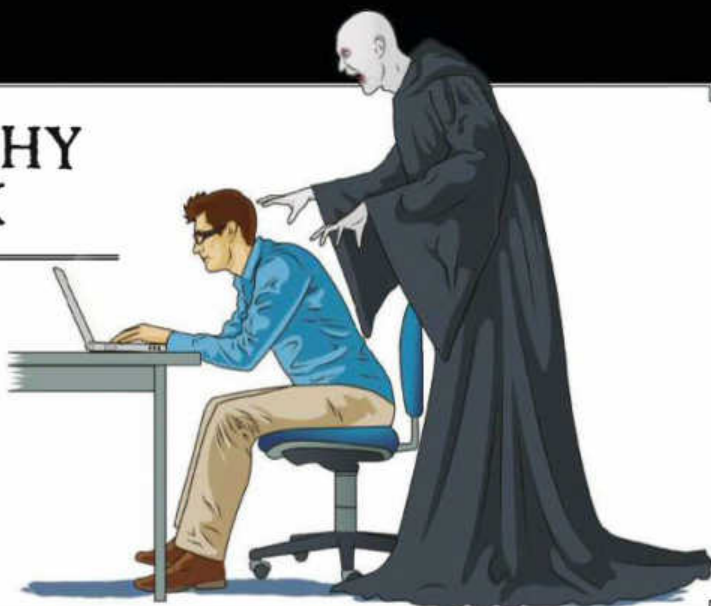
PLAY THE STAFF "In one institution I started a lie that the government was going to build a private prison and they'd all be out of a job."



STAY HEALTHY AT WORK

Want an easy way to live longer? Work in an office? Office workers spend up to 75% of their day sitting, which is linked to a higher risk of diabetes, obesity and heart disease.

The *British Journal Of Sports Medicine* recommends aiming to stand for at least two hours a day during working hours if you want to improve your health. Even better, go for a lunchtime run.



GAIN EVERLASTING LIFE (BY BECOMING A PRIEST)

First, you'll need a hefty dose of faith – doing this dishonestly will just miff the man upstairs. Your denomination will probably have been chosen for you growing up, but bear in mind in Catholicism you'll need to be both celibate and outwardly heterosexual (the Anglicans are a bit more chilled out).

Both churches insist on a period of pastoral service long before you don the cloth: the selection process is surprisingly lengthy – we're talking years – and is meant to weed out the weekend worshippers and find the seriously committed. Other than that, it's not dissimilar to applying for any other job, with an interview process and, yes, references. Once accepted, you'll study theology for at least two years, depending on your experience. After that, you're assigned a church where you'll be a junior honcho (titles vary between denominations), and the virtues of tending to your flock should mean your spiritual capital is looking strong. Career-wise, there's no clear path and you're not going to get rich – but if you've made the right eschatological call, your soul is pretty much set to live forever. Who's laughing now, Dawkins?



COME OUT OF AN AVALANCHE ALIVE

Ex-SAS man Kenneth Jones, author of *Darkness Descending*, survived an avalanche on Mount Moldoveanu in Romania's Carpathian Mountains

PREPARE IN ADVANCE "Pack energy bars, rations and water around your body pockets, not in your rucksack. That bag won't still be on your back once the snow settles."

RUN SIDEWAYS "Move across and down out of the avalanche's way. Running plain downwards keeps you in its path."

CHUCK THE HEAVY STUFF "Any bulky equipment will weigh you down in your escape and bury you further if the snow hits you."

SWIM "Once the avalanche hits, swim or paddle upwards as hard as you can, using front crawl or breaststroke. This will help you keep at the top of the snow once it settles."

DRIBBLE "When the avalanche stops, your saliva will show you which way is up – victims are very often upside down. Digging further down into the snow is a frequent mistake."

CREATE AN AIR POCKET "The larger the pocket, the longer you can survive."



SURVIVE AN AIR CRASH

OK, there's too much smoke coming from the engines and this tailspin is going on a *bit* too long, but what do you care? Sitting in the safest seat on the plane, you're on easy street, already planning your post-survival speech and lucrative book deal. The other saps – especially those in Business Class – have got no hope. Why? Because it's been proved that if you really want to walk away from an air crash, you just need to follow these easy rules...

SIT AT THE BACK According to a study by *Popular Mechanics*, 69% of passengers who were sitting in the back rows survived crashes, as opposed to 49% of those at the front.

BELT UP The same study showed that a seatbelt can help you survive, while no belt means you'll get bounced around the cabin into oblivion.

OPT FOR THE EXIT SEAT The University of Greenwich checked 2,000 passengers from 105 smashes from around the globe. Those sat more than six rows from the exit were, predictably, found to have less chance of escape. **FHM**



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style news

12/15



COLLAB

NICK GRIMSHAW FOR TOPMAN

So what the hell's Grimmy doing designing clothes for Topman, you ask? Well, your favourite Radio 1 DJ is also an ambassador for the British Fashion Council, proving he's got a good eye for style. The collection is full of printed silk shirts, suede fringed jackets and, our favourite, pieces inspired by Nick's pet dog, Pig

(a prominent feature on Grimmy's Snapchat). With Grimmy's own sketch of Pig used on one of the jumpers, this isn't one of those collabs that just cashes in on the celeb's name. This dude is fully involved. *Shirt, £40; jumper, £50; neck ties, £15; jacket, £200; tee, £25; bag, £65, all topman.com*

ACCESSORIES

TRAVEL IN STYLE

With Christmas coming, it's time to start thinking about a decent bag for that long – and probably delayed – journey home. When you're lugging your bag over your shoulder and shoving it in someone's face, you better hope it's a good'un. This is where Bennett Winch comes in. The brand's 24oz waterproof canvas holdall boasts leather trimmings and a British cotton interior – ideal for all the pressies you'll be lugging back home (for yourself). £450, bennettwinch.com



TECH

ALL GOLD EVERYTHING



Yup, these are the Beats by Dre Solo Wireless headphones alongside Apple's iPod, and the colour they've both decided on is fuggin' awesome. Don't mind if we do, Santa. Headphones, £269.95; iPod, £159, both apple.com

WATCHES

CASIO GOES CLEAN-CUT

When we think of Casio, we think of the gold and silver digital watches pretty much everyone has owned at some point. Now the Japanese brand is launching the Edifice Bluetooth EQB-510-1AER, a slick chrome link watch that could well rival timekeeping heavyweights like TAG Heuer and Citizen. And in true Casio style, the price tag won't give you a heart attack, so thank the watch gods for that. £300, watchshop.com



style

Wearing a suit doesn't have to be super-formal. Team it with skate shoes and a casual tee for a street look

Jacket, £265; trousers, £115;
socks, £12, all reiss.com. Top, £50,
rascals.dk. Shoes, £70, vans.co.uk

style

Party
like
an

ANIMAL

With party season just round the corner, it'd be rude not to turn up to a celebration looking suave as hell. Just follow our dress code

Styling: Daisy Deane
Photography: Jamie Kendrick
Grooming: Jodie Hyams

style

Take a risk for your work Christmas do. Add a printed shirt or a felt cap for some serious street cred

Jacket, £115; trousers, £105, both
Libertine-Libertine at numbersixlondon.com.
Shirt, £28, asos.com. Hat, £50, whistles.com

Coat, £100, asos.com. T-shirt,
£60, Tonsure at selfridges.com.
Trousers, £110, whistles.com

A formal occasion doesn't
always call for shirts. Just
invest in a smart tee and an
overcoat that oozes style

style

Team a textured bomber with tapered joggers and you're set to own the dance floor

Bomber, £60, asos.com. Shirt, £95,
Libertine-Libertine at numbrixlondon.com. Trousers, £170, soulund.com

Jumper, £55, levi.com. Shirt, £70, luke1977.com. Trousers, £60, selfridges.com. Bow tie, £10, riverisland.com. Watch, £215, larssonandjennings.com. Socks, £12, reiss.com. Shoes, £125, ghbass-eu.com


A sweat worn over a shirt is always a winner. Make an extra effort with a bow tie



style

If you've got the balls, always choose patterned tailoring over plain colours

Blazer, £160, bensherman.com, T-shirt, £30,
Rascals at urbanindustry.co.uk, Glasses,
£149, Barbour at visionexpress.com

A man with short brown hair is sitting on a wooden staircase. He is wearing a red and black plaid jacket over a dark shirt, dark trousers, and white high-top sneakers. He is looking towards the camera. The background features a wall with green and white patterned wallpaper and a large painting of several colorful parrots on a branch. A shadow of the man is cast on the wall behind him.

A slick pair of white leather trainers will upgrade any day outfit to smart-casual

Jacket, £310, Off-White at selfridges.com.
Sweatshirt, £316.34, jbrandjeans.com. Shirt,
£85, prettygreen.com. Trousers, £190,
loudalton.com. Socks, £12, reiss.com.
Shoes, £80, frankwrightshoes.com

PRODUCT

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JACKET, £599,
BARBOUR.COM

BLANKET, £115,
WOOLRICH.EU

BOOTS, £120, CLARKS
AT SCHUH.CO.UK

SWEATSHIRT, £65, TSPTTR AT
COUVERTUREANDTHEGARBSTORE.COM

UMBRELLA, £45, COUVERTURE
ANDTHEGARBSTORE.COM

GLOVES, £25, PENFIELD.COM

CANDLE, £37, MALIN +
GOETZ AT SPACENK.COM

AFTERSHAVE, £64 FOR
100ML, HUGOBOSS.COM

style

BAG, £55, POLER AT
URBANOUTFITTERS.CO.UK

JEANS, £100, LEVI.COM

SHIRT, £185, APC AT SELFRIDGES.COM

HAT, £45, PARKALONDON.COM

SOCKS, £8, WEARETUKTUK.COM

SCARF, £45, ORIGINALPENGUIN.CO.UK

WATCH, £85, NIXON.COM

KIM KARDASHIAN SELFISH,
£11.95, URBANOUTFITTERS.CO.UK

PHOTOGRAPHY: CONOR SHEEHAN



A MAN'S GUIDE TO

Smelling, looking — & — feeling like a god

Swot up on the best of
the grooming world...



WINNER
Hugo Boss

What would be
the one grooming
product you'd take
to a desert island?

An aphrodisiac-
inspired aftershave
of course. The only
thing you'd really
need would be
a fragrance to
entice the ladies
from the other side
of the isle so man
could reproduce
and keep the
dream alive!

WORDS: DAVE DEANE PHOTOGRAPHY: MARCO VITTORE

**WINNER**

Phillips Series

7000 Shaver

NOMINATIONS

Braun Series 3,

Oral-B Pro 6500

SmartSeries

No one likes a face that a) hasn't found its facial hair identity and b) is all scabby from sub-standard razors. So when an electric shaver allows you to maintain your designer stubble or be as smooth as Kim K's bum, and is for sensitive skin, it'd be rude not to invest, right? Right.

Become
a smooth
operator

**WINNER**

Gillette Fusion

Flexball Manual

NOMINATIONS

Bic Flex 3,

Wilkinson Sword

Hydro 5 Groomer

Remember all those ads of bald men pulling stupid faces? Well it wasn't for nothing, because those silly men actually got a seriously clean shave without cutting their lips like you used to back in your school toilets.





WINNER
Nivea Sensitive
Cooling Moisturiser

NOMINATIONS
Aesop Camellia
Nut Facial Cream,
Dove Men+Care
Ultra Hydrating
Cream

Keeping your mug smooth and hydrated doesn't mean reaching for designer brands to guarantee celeb-style results. Nivea has been keeping men looking fine for 35 years and will have your lady-friend thinking they're on the arm of George Clooney in no time.

Keep calm and smooth your beard



WINNER
Wahl Beard Oil
NOMINATIONS
The Body Shop
Massage Oil, Ted
Baker Face Wash

When you think about beard oils, you might assume there's not much variety. No stiff hold, no texturing effect, no slick look. All true, but Wahl has worked on the scents with a selection of four fragrances. We like Relax, infused with ginger and orange to soothe the soul.





WINNER
Fish
NOMINATIONS
Fudge, VO5

With a 20-year-old salon based in London's Soho (delivering cool-ass haircuts and road-testing its products there and then), Fish knows its gel from its wax. It boasts three *huge* ranges perfect for every man.



Two-day
freshness
in a can



WINNER
L'Oréal Men Expert
48H Cool Power
Anti-Perspirant
NOMINATIONS
Head &
Shoulders, Lynx

Who wants to pump iron and stink out the weights room? No one. L'Oréal's new 48H Cool Power Anti-Perspirant is long-lasting, so it'll keep you smelling fresh if you were to push yourself to do that second round in the gym.





One small step for shaving. One giant leap for sensitive skin.

Introducing the new Philips Shaver series 7000, specially designed for sensitive skin. Its comfort glide rings with anti-friction coating reduces skin irritation, redness and razor burn.* Feel the difference.

Built for you, whatever your mission.

innovation + you



Dermatologically
tested

Series 7000
Shaver

*vs. Philips predecessor range

PHILIPS



available at Boots
Order by 8pm and collect for
free tomorrow from midday.



let's feel good

See www.boots.com/ordertodaycollecttomorrow for full terms & conditions about the Order & Collect service. Geographical exclusions apply.



WINNER
Jimmy Choo Man
NOMINATIONS
Paco Rabanne
Invictus,
Penhaligon's
Blasted Heath

When Kit Harington AKA *Game Of Thrones'* Jon Snow is the face of a fragrance, you know it's going to be badass. And with suede, pineapple leaf and patchouli added, it's no wonder this aftershave smells so goddamn good.



This product
will stop you
looking ruff



WINNER

Bulldog
NOMINATIONS
The Shave Doctor,
The Bluebeards
Revenge

With products that are entirely organic, cruelty-free, work a treat and are as cheap as chips (with stylish packaging), you're on to a winner with this brand. From face scrub to post-shave balm, this range deserves a round of applause.



It's light years ahead

Trim your stubble with the award-winning Philips Beard trimmer series 9000. As the world's only laser-guided beard and stubble trimmer, it gives you the confidence to achieve precise straight lines every time.

Built for you, whatever your mission.

innovation + you



World's
1st
laser-
guided

Series 9000
Beard trimmer

PHILIPS



available at Boots
Order by 8pm and collect for
free tomorrow from midday.



let's feel good

See www.boots.com/ordertodaycollecttomorrow for full terms & conditions about the Order & Collect service. Geographical exclusions apply.

SPIN THE DECKS WITH FISH

Follow DJ Jamie's lead and get your barnet on point with hairstyling brand Fish

➔ With 20 years of hairstyling genius under its belt, Fish is – without a doubt – the go-to brand for badass hair products. Be it a heavy-duty hairspray to keep those damn strays in place or a lightweight wax for everyday use, Fish has got it sorted. Those guys sure know what they're doing, too – the salon-grown company sits in the heart of Soho, London, testing out the latest products on happy punters, so you can be sure you're not wasting your pennies on some tat that won't do the job. These bad-boy products do exactly what they say on the tin, while making even the coolest of guys look dapper. Time to whip that barnet into shape.

Jamie Stedman, a 26-year-old DJ, spends his nights spinning tunes in London's biggest venues, so he needs his hair to look the business. Cue some bad-ass styling essentials from hair-product gods Fish – Fishfingers Shape Defining Wax and Superfish Fishsticks Fixing Hairspray are the go-to products to keep his hair up all night. We pulled him away from the decks for five minutes to chat through his look...

How would you describe your own style?

It's a mixture of snowboarding, skating and sportswear. I buy a lot of my clothes from sports and skate shops – Cali brands like Diamond Supply Co do some great pieces. For a smarter look, a buttoned-up Levi's shirt is always a winner.

What's your go-to outfit?

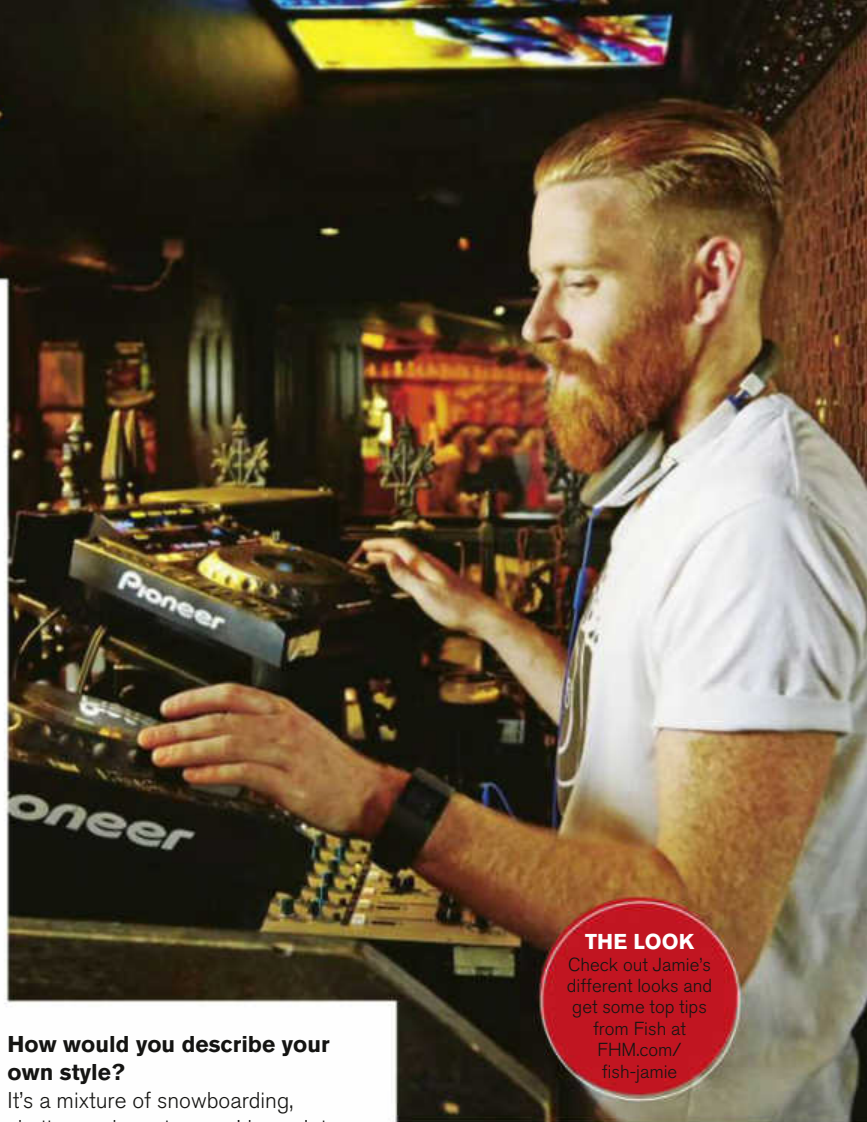
A Claesen's No1 white or navy T-shirt, black Zara jeans and Nike Air Max 90s.

Who are your style influences?

There's not one person in particular I look up to, but my style is a bit of a mish-mash influenced by hip-hop, skatewear and anyone with a strong beard! Some people may say I look a bit scruffy, but I like it.

What products are in your washbag?

Lanvin Avant Garde, AKA the best aftershave ever. Fish Fishfingers Wax,



THE LOOK

Check out Jamie's different looks and get some top tips from Fish at FHM.com/fish-jamie



beard oil, a comb – oh, and Listerine. I bloody love Listerine.

How do you get dressed for a night on the decks?

It depends on the night. Usually I'll try on about 10 white tees before going back to the first one. Then I throw it on with jeans and my trusty Nikes. If it's a smarter event, I'll swap the tee for a checked or denim shirt buttoned to the top.

What's been your worst ever hair moment?

There has been a catalogue of crazy hair moments, including a Donny Tourette-esque bleached mop when I was at uni. And up until recently I'd been rocking a rather long ponytail/man bun, which my missus hated! Growing your hair is strangely addictive. I was quite proud of my longer locks but I was forced to have the chop in the end.

What do you do to your barnet in the morning?

Slap some wax on it, comb it, pull it back and go.

How long does it take you to do your hair in the morning?

Three minutes max. No joke.

What's your swear-by product?

I never leave the house without my aftershave and beard comb.



GET JAMIE'S LOOK

01 Achieve Jamie's texturised, choppy look by applying a small amount of Fish Fishfingers Shape Defining Wax through the ends of the hair.

02 Hold the style in place with Superfish Fishsticks Fixing Hairspray.

Fish hairstyling products are available to buy at fishsoho.com, Tesco, Superdrug and Boots

Fish



“GROWING YOUR HAIR IS STRANGELY ADDICTIVE. I WAS QUITE PROUD OF MY LONGER LOCKS BUT I WAS FORCED TO HAVE THE CHOP IN THE END”

BIONIC

Upgrade

EDITED BY TOM WARD

The PRE-EMPTIVE CHRISTMAS STRIKE

Santa
APPROVED

In a mere seven weeks, you'll be face-deep in chocolate, turkey and beers wearing little Santa hats. All of which will mess up your fitness faster than a lock-in at Greggs – so you best nip the festive bloat in the bud now

➔ Apparently, the average person puts on around half a stone during the festive period – usually beginning around 1 November and ending with a crushing hangover on New Year's Day – with the extra pounds taking up to three gruelling months to finally shift.

The British Dietetic Association suggests countering this on the big day itself by eating turkey without the skin and not putting butter on your

vegetables, which leads us to believe that the BDA is made up of dead-eyed puritanical freaks that are allergic to fun.

So, instead of becoming a Christmas bore, we've put together a handy eight-page guide to running, jumping, eating and drinking your way to festive fitness. By the time Christmas Day comes around, that family box of Roses will crumble against your rock-hard abs like a snowball against your neighbour's window.



THE WORKOUT



→ If you're anything like us, your get-fit routine starts in early January and ends around mid-February. To make your return to the gym as painless as possible, we roped in Alex Davies, personal training specialist at Virgin Active, to talk us through a revolutionary idea: staying in shape for longer than one month of the year. Of course, to do that, we need a training regime that requires minimal effort and equipment. A training regime like this...

MORNING

"If you're going to have a heavy workout first thing, eat a high-carb meal the night before. For a light workout, a banana and a black coffee half an hour before is fine.

"The most important thing to do at this time of day is mobilise your joints as your tissue will have shrunk while you've been in bed. Get on your tiptoes and stretch and swing your arms around.

"If you want to get in shape and build lean muscle, focus on exercises like cleans, squat cleans, bench presses and deadlifts, all of which use lots of muscles, increasing your metabolism and burning off loads of calories, meaning you'll lose fat quicker.

"Workouts should be about variety. Running on a treadmill is a steady exercise and your body recovers quickly. Instead, shock the body by doing big movements for better results. I'd recommend two or three half-hour sessions at high-intensity to keep you burning calories throughout the day."

AFTERNOON

"Sit-ups can be bad for the back, but for a lunch-time workout, press-ups and bodyweight squats are pretty easy. You can also mix in some rock press-ups (a press-up with your bum in the air and the weight on your shoulders).

"Get-ups are also good, and knackerings. Just get down on the ground, flat on your back, then get back up again. Do 20 of each, rest for a minute, then do the whole thing four more times over 20 minutes."


EVENING

"Aim to eat a protein-rich meal with carbs every two hours throughout the day. Protein shakes should be taken within half an hour of working out and you should drink two litres of water a day. Don't forget to stretch.

"There's no harm in doing exercise at night, but it's like caffeine; your metabolism gets so sparked up that it might make you unable to sleep for a while. Static weights like bench presses are best because they're less likely to keep you awake when you're finished."



SURVIVE THE OFFICE PARTY



This drink
is too pretty
for you



➔ Before you drink your way through your grandad's 'old-fashioned' views on immigration on Christmas Day, you'll probably have a whole month of boozy 'training' to get through, the highlight of which will no doubt be your annual office knees-up.

Traditionally, this is the time to drunkenly come on to your hot colleague, tell the boss where to stick it and inform the slovenly intern what you think of them. This year, though, we suggest a different tactic; one that will not only help you avoid a dressing down and a walk of shame into the office the next day, but will put you on your way to becoming a wintery Adonis. Jo Travers, the dietitian behind The London Nutritionist (theharleystreetnutritionist.co.uk), fills us in.

THE CHEAP CHOICE

"It's important to remember that alcohol is a toxin (albeit one of the more fun ones), so it's all pretty bad for you. But some drinks are worse than others: beer and cider are very high in calories (the average craft beer has 156 calories per bottle, while a pint of cider weighs in at 210

calories), and have pretty much nothing going for them except lasting longer than short drinks." So, a pint is good if you're trying to limit how much you drink or make your booze last that little bit longer since you're broke from buying your great aunt's Christmas presents, but terrible otherwise.

THE FANCY ORDER

"Cocktails tend to contain loads of calories and alcohol, so are possibly the least healthy type of drink. Adding fruit juice will give you *some* vitamins. Milk is also a great mixer for additional protein and fat to help reduce the impact of the sugar content on blood glucose. Some argue that a White Russian made with milk instead of cream isn't a real White Russian but, as the dude says, 'Life goes on, man.'"

THE PRE-GAME

"The most important thing to remember is to eat before you drink. Have a balanced meal with carbs, protein and vegetables. This will help protect your liver and minimise the hangover. Plus, you'll feel less tempted to swing by the kebab shop on the way home."

THE DRINKS



01 Gin and tonic

It's a fact that gin increases digestive enzymes and helps to prevent cancer. Best of all, it comes in at 97 calories per 42 grams. Result!

Pro order: With hints of 'orange marmalade and lemon tart', Sipsmith is the gin you'll want in your stocking. Swap the lime for cucumber for a dose of vitamin K, potassium and vitamin B1. It's basically one of your five-a-day. £29.50, 31dover.com

02 ka and lemonade

"Spirits with diet mixers are best in terms of calories, but they're really quick to drink – so they may lead to drunkenness early on," Jo warns.

Pro order: Two Birds is a light, British-made vodka produced in batches of 100 bottles at a time. Best of all, it's made from barley, sugar beet, cereal and root crops, which is basically a salad. Pour it over cubed ice, top up with lemonade, then add lemon slices and some mint. £28.95, 31dover.com

03 wine

"Some v n rouge isn't too bad calorie-wise and contains flavonoids, which supposedly help blood pressure and your mental abilities," Jo says.

Pro order: While your mum might swear by a bottle of Bordeaux, its almost-pollution-free neighbour Cahors is where the real wine aficionado goes for their squashed grapes. Made with 70% Malbec grapes, the wine is almost black, which looks great on your teeth after three glasses. €3.50 per bottle, pidou.com

MASTER THE CHRISTMAS BUFFET

➔ That vol-au-vent might look delicious, but each mouthful is packed with physique-destroying calories. "With the exception of nuts, nibbles tend to be all horrible, orange-coloured carbs," Jo explains. "It's much better to eat a balanced meal before any festive parties and only pick at the buffet. Crudités and hummus or cheesy dips are the ones to head for." Here's how to do the festive spread properly...

01 Multigrain bread

High in both fibre and protein, if you're going for bread, multigrain should always be your first choice. Not only that, but certain types of whole-wheat, multigrain foods can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and colon cancer.

02 Sesame and quinoa

A superfood double act. Sesame seeds reduce blood pressure, help prevent diabetes and lower cholesterol. Quinoa contains calcium, magnesium and twice the protein of rice – just don't pronounce it 'kwin-oa'. It's 'keenwah', yeah?

03 Cheese

Cheese has benefits (protein, calcium, fat soluble vitamins) but is generally also high in fat and salt. Soft cheeses have a higher water content, meaning they're lower in fat, while cottage cheese contains

Give the Wotsits a swerve



healthy fatty acids and is great for muscle building.

04 Honey-roast ham

Ham is high in protein and contains vitamins B12, B6, iron and magnesium. It's also high in sodium, so choose it only when you can't force any more turkey down your throat.

05 Hummus

An easy way to ingest essential fibres, hummus contains a high level of protein which, as well as bulking you up, keeps skin, muscles and blood healthy.

06 Berries

Cranberries are high in antioxidants and can apparently help kill off cancer cells. Strawberries can help boost your

immunity, which is perfect for fighting off winter colds. And raspberries are rich in vitamins C, A, E, K and B. Show-offs.

07 Sweet and salty popcorn

Packed with antioxidants, fibre and more iron than spinach, popcorn is a great option if you're trying to fit into those party trousers. Sweet and salted versions obviously aren't as healthy, but, hey, it's Christmas.

08 Vegetable sticks

Peppers are extremely low in calories and contain capsaicin, which can control diabetes and ease general inflammation. And carrots actually can help you see in the dark*, perfect for when you're

sneaking down to open those presents at 3am. *No, this isn't a lie.

09 Nuts

People with nuts in their diet lose, on average, an extra 1.4lb per week. Macadamia nuts help speed up your metabolism and reduce cholesterol, while half a cup of walnuts a day will improve your all-round sperm quality.

And for dessert...

Desserts are unavoidable over Christmas, no matter how healthy you're trying to be. Limit the damage by choosing something as low in sugar and carbs as possible. If you really want to annoy your guests, opt for Greek yogurt with honey (not recommended).

All food available from sainsburys.co.uk. All crockery available from habitat.co.uk

FESTIVE OFFENDERS

Here are the three worst nibbles for your new athletic physique

01 Battenburg

It turns out that the delicious marzipan-coated cake is so high in sugar, it could quite possibly give you diabetes. Especially if you eat a whole one at once, like us.

02 Pigs in blankets

Pork sausages in bacon blankets are essentially piggy cannibalism. The fat content isn't exactly on your side, either.

03 Sherry trifle

Yes, your grandma loves sherry trifle, but she's old enough to not give a flip about how good she looks in swim shorts, so we'll let her off. Not only is it high in fat and sugar, it's a bad combination with a stomach full of booze.

05

07

08

06

09

THE RUN UP...

➔ As Jesus' birthday approaches, Jo takes us through some final preparations.

The caffeine addict

"If you really can't kick your coffee habit, aim for a skinny latte to provide some useful protein alongside your caffeine hit."

Snack attack

"The purpose of snacks is to keep your blood glucose even and hunger at bay until your next meal. The ideal snack would be a small handful of 12-15 nuts."

Plate half full

"At mealtimes, fill half your plate with vegetables, a quarter with protein and a quarter with carbohydrates. Remember, like a puppy, a healthy balanced diet should be for life, not just for the run-up to Christmas."

FHM's tip:

If you're struggling to stay on track, it could be because you're going wrong with the most important meal of the day, breakfast. A fast and cheap way of staying full until lunch is to scramble four eggs in a pan. Eggs are also a top source of protein and something called choline, an essential nutrient to boost your brain.

Coffee available at lalaniandco.com



Give your loved ones the bird



...AND THE BIG DAY

➔ If you've stuck to the plan so far, cutting loose on Christmas Day shouldn't be a problem. But, if the odd chocolate log supper has made you fall off the wagon, Jo's tips will help you reduce the damage come the 25th.

01 Turkey

"This is a great source of lean protein. To get the most out of it, go for the dark meat, which is higher in iron than the lighter breast meat."

02 Brussels sprouts

"Full of phytonutrients that have an antioxidant effect, meaning they protect your DNA from damage from free radicals [molecules that can speed up the appearance of ageing]. Keep nutrients intact by steaming them until al dente."

03 Parsnips

"Parsnips can help lower blood pressure thanks to their potassium content. Instead of roasting them in masses of fat, brush them with a little vegetable oil before putting them in the oven."

04 Goose fat

"All fat carries fat-soluble vitamins necessary for healthy skin and eyes and, although high in calories, this has less saturated fat than butter."

05 Gravy

"Make your own gravy from the meat juices and water from the cooked vegetables to get back some of the lost vitamins and nutrients."

06 Bread sauce

"This is rich in calcium, but using milk rather than cream will help."

FHM's tip:

Stick to our plan for great results, but if a few selection boxes slip through the cracks, it's not the end of the world. Remember, there are only 365 days until next Christmas...

Get cultural in Reykjavik

*Hipster hangout? Romantic hotspot?
Game Of Thrones haven? The
Icelandic capital is all this and more...*

Getting there

01 Easyjet flights to Reykjavik Keflavik take just under three hours.

02 Fly from Belfast, Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester and all London airports except Heathrow.

03 Prices start at £35 one way. easyjet.com

Make the big gesture

To see the full effect of the Northern Lights, you'll likely need to head out to the Icelandic countryside on a dark, cloudless evening between September and mid-April (although you can see them in the city on really clear nights, too). To avoid disappointing

your better half, be sure to book the Warm Baths & Cool Lights tour, which includes a dip in the Laugarvatn Fontana thermal baths. If the aurora borealis isn't on your side, the breath-taking candy-coloured sunset reflecting off the lake will still fuel the romance. £50, reykjavikexcursions.is



Eat on the streets

Block Burger's bacon burger with waffle fries is one to brag about, but for extra-cheap, delicious street food, try soup served up in a bread bowl, from just about any café on the main street, Laugavegur. Just the job on a cold day.



Spot the largest mammals on earth

You can (somewhat controversially) eat whales in Iceland, but you're probably much better off watching them playing around with dolphins, far out at sea. Catch a tour from the harbour. Afterwards, take a dip in the famous Blue Lagoon – essentially just a very large, very warm bath. No whales here, but it's still the perfect place to while away a peaceful afternoon. *Whale tour, £46, specialtours.is. Blue Lagoon, £35, reykjavik excursions.is*



Expand your horizons

When you do fancy soaking up a bit of culture, it's worth noting that the Museum of Photography is free to browse, as is the (awesome) weekend flea market in Kolaportid. And if you're really at a loose end, why not check out the Phallogological Museum? Yep. That.



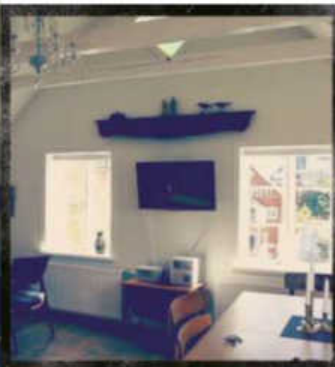
Take a walk on the wildling side

Game Of Thrones fans, rejoice! You can walk the path to the Eyrie, and reenact Brienne's dust-up with The Hound in the actual locations where they were filmed. Not a clue what we're talking about? Don't worry – there's still plenty to enjoy in the Thingvellir National Park – including trekking past the active Hekla volcano. No White Walkers involved, fortunately. *£53, grayline.com*



Live like a local

To avoid generic hotels, opt for a Scandinavian-style apartment via Airbnb – giving you access to the best the city has to offer, or quieter vibes if you stay a bit further out. (Note, keep the champagne on ice for post-Northern Lights bubbles.) *airbnb.com*



upgrade : Tested

Off the record

Vinyl sales are climbing, so bin the CDs and go old-school



We roped in record label man James Endeacott – who signed The Strokes, The Libertines and Ruen Brothers

– to give us the rundown on the high street's most eye-catching record players...



Crosley Collegiate Three Speed Turntable
£119.99,
amazon.co.uk

The lowdown:

A lightweight, briefcase-bound record player with built-in speakers and a headphone jack.

The verdict:

"This is just a bit of fun. It's got no bass, and I don't know what that screeching noise is. Good for playing 45s, but that's it"

Overall: 2/5



Lenco L-90 Walnut Veneer Turntable
£230,
urbanoutfitters.co.uk

The lowdown:

A semi-automatic turntable with inbuilt pre-amplifier.

The verdict:

"A good entry point but you'll need an amp, speakers, leads and a solid needle. A decent set-up is £500 – but it's worth it."

Overall: 4/5



VinylPlay

GPO Attache

£74.95,
cuckooland.com

The lowdown:

A three-speed portable player with built-in speakers. Can record vinyl to a USB.

The verdict:

"They've made this look old-fashioned. It says '33, 45, 78' – nobody buys 78s any more. You could take this camping but it wouldn't be your main set-up."

Overall: 1/5



Flexson VinylPlay Turntable

£329.99, flexson.co.uk

The lowdown:

A UK-produced vinyl player for albums and 45 singles. Requires speakers and an amp.

The verdict:

"Without a doubt, this is better quality than the others. If you're serious about music, get one of these 'separates', then invest in an amp and some speakers."

Overall: 5/5

Winner!

THE VINYL COUNTDOWN

James' ultimate record player essentials



Blonde On Blonde, Bob Dylan

"This is a really great early rock record."



The Clash, The Clash

"A raucous album – it even sounds brilliant scratched."



A Love Supreme, John Coltrane

"A jazz classic. This is essential."



Dare, The Human League

"A great pop record from the 1980s."

upgrade : Expert

Become the king of comedy

Funny how? Funny like this guy



Making his name through Vines, Twitter and a brilliant

BBC sketch show, Glaswegian comedian Limmy has long been an FHM favourite. With new book *Daft Wee Stories* out now, he talks us through discovering your inner funnyman...

01 EMBRACE YOUR POTENTIAL

"I used to work in an office. I wasn't the fucking pain-in-the-arse funny guy with the comedy tie or anything like that, but I did try to be funny. I wasn't the court jester, but I definitely liked a laugh. Generally in an office you get quiet people, and I certainly wasn't a quiet person."

02 SPREAD THE WORD

"I used to be a Flash developer, making websites for commercial clients. I wanted to make fun things for me as well, so I made limmy.com in 1999. In 2004, I made a funny video compilation and a production company got in touch and said, 'Who are you and what is it you want to do?' That's when talk of the show came about."

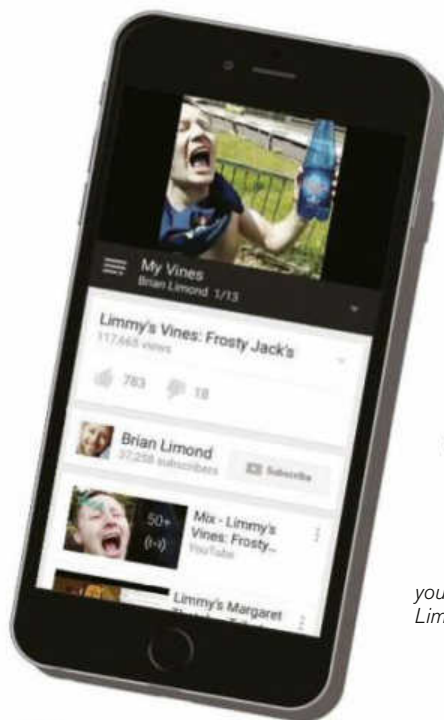
03 SAY "AYE"

"I made a podcast, *Limmy's World Of Glasgow*, which did really well, then I got asked to do stand-up. I said no, but my girlfriend said, 'Say aye, for fuck's sake'. So I did a few shows and then the Edinburgh Fringe. By that point, I had a pilot for *Limmy's Show* and stopped the stand-up because it's the telly stuff that I really love."

04 GO IT ALONE

"In my first stand-up I used characters from the podcast. I didn't like it because I'm not very good at improvising in character when people start heckling. I've got an eight-minute fucking routine to remember. But, if you're yourself, you can stutter and fuck things up and people go, 'That doesn't matter. That's just what he's like.'"

Park yourself on the nearest kerb and enjoy straight from the bottle



youtube.com/
LimmyDotComBlog





Stand-up's all about the mic skills. Like 8 Mile, but funny

05

DON'T FIGHT THE MUSE

"Inspiration comes from whatever pops into your head. The Plasterer character was a combination of a guy we had round when we moved house and an electrician who had this mad, loud laugh. With the Frosty Jack's Vines, I was walking by the park and there was an empty bottle so I just thought, 'I'll do a video.'"

06

TRY NOT TO OVERTHINK IT

"Most people's Vines have big set-ups and big ideas. That's too much like fucking hard work for me. I just chat shite and start recording. It's almost better to just hit record and see what you come up with, rather than over-planning what you're going to do for the next five minutes."

07

BE AN ALL-ROUNDER

"I wrote, directed, did the theme music and starred in *Limmy's Show*. I've got certain ideas and, as I type a sketch, I start to think about how it's going to look and how it's going to be acted. When you're writing, the idea of letting someone else put it all together makes you go, 'Fuck that.'"

08

GET ON TWITTER

"Topical stuff is important for stand-up but if you're on tour, it's difficult to come up with really funny, relevant stuff each week. Give it a month and it's out of date. Twitter's instant. But I got too serious on it during the Scottish Referendum. I had a look at my timeline and thought, 'Wait a minute, I've not been funny in about a fucking fortnight!'"

Don't be daft, buy this book. £10.49, amazon.co.uk



VINE GUIDE

If you're after surreal, bite-size commentaries on life, look no further

01 THE PLASTERER

Limmy's most popular Vine sees him play Scotland's most annoying handyman, offering tips on everything from wallpapering to children's puzzle manufacturers as he slowly slides into alcoholism.

02 MY PATTY

Was Limmy the originator of the phrase, "I think you're getting me confused with someone who gives a fuck"? Limmy says yes.

03 WHAT I THINK OF THE FRENCH

Returning from "a wee trip to Paris", Limmy answers the essential questions "Are they stinking?" and "Are they rude?" Turns out it's all a lie.

04 FROSTY JACK'S

One day you find a bottle of Frosty Jack's in a bush, the next day you're running around topless shouting at an A road. Man's decline eloquently explained in a neat 62 seconds.

Micro fury

The world's favourite two-seater sports car is back and better than ever

01

It's 100kg lighter than its predecessor and the same size as the '90s original.

02

The swanky new 7-inch touch-screen display inside tethers to your smartphone.

03

The aggressive new front end has razor-sharp LED headlamps.

04

Make your choice from two punchy engines for high-revving B-road action.

We live in a world where things are getting bigger and more powerful every day. OK, Creme Eggs are definitely getting smaller, but these days even the humble hot hatch has enough grunt under the bonnet to shame older supercars.

It's refreshing, then, to see that the Mazda MX-5 – officially the world's bestselling two-seater sports car – is back, focusing on the brand's original ethos of a low-powered race car in a tiny, lightweight shell.

It's also a million times more stylish than previous models and packs enough tech in its small frame to make the secret service look out of date.

The best MX-5 yet? You betcha.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Doesn't lightweight and low-powered equal boring?

Don't be daft. Although the new MX-5 comes with a 1.5-litre engine that develops just 129bhp (or a 2.0-litre version offering a slightly better 158bhp), it's 100kg lighter than the previous model and handles like a tiny track-day warrior. A corner at 50mph feels like twice that speed.

MX-5. Hairdressers. Discuss.

The latest model has undergone a serious styling update, including the latest version of Mazda's flowing Kodo design language. Sharp LED headlights, angular creases and an

angry front grille mean it's now less Toni & Guy, more Sweeney Todd. Plus, if you squint hard enough, it looks a bit like a Jaguar F-Type that's been through a hot wash.

Is it really that cheap?

The most basic MX-5 starts at £18,495, but for a few thousand more you'll also get a smart 7-inch touchscreen display with a futuristic controller. You can link your phone to enjoy online radio, or pump tunes from Spotify while you drift around a country lane like rally driver Ken Block with his Calvins on fire.

Can I fit my luggage in it?

Storage space is not the MX-5's strong point. The boot can fit a couple



MAZDA MX-5 1.5-LITRE SE-L NAV

PRICE: £19,845

ENGINE: 1496cc,
4-cylinder petrol

TOP SPEED: 127mph

POWER: 129bhp

0-62MPH: 8.3 seconds

of weekend bags in, but the cabin is a bit on the cosy side. In fact, there's not even a glovebox for your sunnies – they'll have to live in a cubbyhole. There are cup holders, though, so your skinny vanilla soy latte is safe.

What are the figures like?

The most powerful 2.0-litre engine can propel this pocket rocket from 0-62mph in 7.3 seconds and on to a top speed of 133mph, but the smaller 1.5-litre engine actually feels more fun. The 0-62mph dash takes a second longer but the car sounds ace when screaming through the gears. And, thanks to the direct steering and rear-wheel-drive, it feels like you're driving on the ragged edge, even

when you're just popping to Tesco.

How easy is it to drop the top?

To save weight, Mazda has stuck with the traditional manual fabric top, so you just pop a small lever to fling the roof back. It's a lot quicker than the mechanised versions on most modern convertibles and can be done at any speed – though we wouldn't suggest doing so while humming along the motorway, for obvious reasons.

So it's time to get rid of the Ford Focus, then?

Definitely. If you've got kids and a dog it might not be a good idea, but those with the spare cash for a second car won't look back. It's the most fun you'll have this side of £20k. **FHM**

Stig-like thrills on a shoestring



Volkswagen Polo GTI

Packs a 189bhp 1.8-litre turbo engine under its bonnet and handles like a go-kart. £18,900



Toyota GT86

Stylish coupe styling with a chassis honed for track day punishment. £22,495



Renault Clio RS 220 Trophy

More power, launch control and seating for five make this perfect for a weekend getaway. £21,780



Vauxhall Corsa VXR

Smashes the 0-60mph sprint in 6.5 seconds, with room for your five-a-side squad. £17,995

Hot advice from a cool girl:

**How to
impress her
with your
dinner
etiquette**

FEATURING

Aline

Dinner dates can be a minefield. Do you wear a shirt? Should you split the bill? Are you allowed a pudding? Luckily, lifelong food fan Aline (plus our relationship editor Girl On The Net) is here to tell us how to do it right...



01

You lead her into the restaurant through the kitchen, *Goodfellas*-style, despite not knowing a single member of staff

Aline says: That'd be the most awkward date ever.

Girl On The Net says:

Pretty gutsy. The key would be pulling it off with confidence.

FHM says: You're not Henry Hill. Stick to the front door like everybody else.

02

You attempt to impress by speaking your best French to the waiter, despite being in Nando's

Aline says: Stop confusing the waiter and focus on what's really important – me.

Girl On The Net says:

What's French for "cheeky"? If you can nail this in a funny way, I'd be putty in your greasy, peri-peri hands.

FHM says: Mange tout.

03

Bamboozled by the wine menu, you opt for "one of each"

Aline says: I'm not a wine connoisseur, so this would be a great chance to expand our knowledge together.


Girl On The Net says:

Being hammered makes for a crap date. Stick to the classic trick of picking the second-cheapest bottle.

FHM says: A hip flask of vodka guzzled during trips to the loo should see you through any awkward lulls in conversation.

“Being hammered makes for a crap date”





**“Money is
never a
substitute
for having
an actual
personality”**

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARC COLLINS. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: VERENA
VAN DER HEYDEN USING MAC. LINGERIE: AMERICAN APPAREL



04

You place a wad of £20 notes on the table and say, “Order whatever you want, love – it’s on me”

Aline says: Be a gent and keep your money in your wallet, where it belongs.

Girl On The Net says: Don’t make it look like cash is your best feature. Money is never a substitute for having an actual personality.

FHM says: Leave your macho posturing in the ‘80s, with your moustache.

05

You spot your ex at the next table and wave her over in the hope she can talk up your bedroom skills

Aline says: Don’t even think about it! You’d end up with my drink in your face.

Girl On The Net says: Your date will be mortified. Plus, you should never talk up your bedroom game – instead, lower expectations so she’ll be pleasantly surprised.

FHM says: Cheque, please!

06

You insist on doing a ‘Lady And The Tramp’ with your spaghetti bolognese

Aline says: Unless you’re part of a Disney movie, playing with your food won’t turn up the heat.

Girl On The Net says: This means you only get one portion of spaghetti bolognese between you.

FHM says: Keep your food to yourself. If she wanted onion rings, she should have ordered them.

“Unless you’re in a Disney movie, playing with your food won’t turn up the heat”

07

You order the lobster like a big-timer, despite your seafood allergy

Aline says: I’m most impressed by a man who can be himself. What makes you think I would want a big-timer anyway?

Girl On The Net says:

If you end up getting together, she’ll take you for lobster every birthday and anniversary as a special treat, and you’ll have to swallow its gross, spidery flesh at least twice a year until the day you get divorced.

FHM says: Stick to steak.

08

You secretly order a wedding cake, complete with engagement ring, for dessert

Aline says: That’s cute, but if you go there I expect you to get on one knee.

Girl On The Net says:

Proceed with caution. You don’t want to be the guy crying alone on the night bus, picking globs of cake out of his hair.

FHM says: Tiramisu is a great dessert for two.

Read more from *Girl On The Net* at girlonthenet.com



A man with a well-groomed beard and short hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and red tie. He has tattoos on his fingers and a watch on his left wrist. The background is a textured, light grey wall.

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True story:

“I hadn’t faced death before, but I understood it in that moment”



ROGER (LEFT) WAS TRAVELLING ON AN OLD INDIAN BUS BEFORE IT WAS BLOWN UP



In early 1978, 26-year-old Yorkshireman Roger Sproston decided to leave the UK behind to travel around Europe and the Middle East with little more than a rucksack and a few travellers’ cheques.

After spending eight months travelling through Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey, Roger reached India before boarding a bus back to the UK.

But this was only the prelude to the turbulent situation Roger stumbled into on the Afghanistan/Iraq border, halfway through his return journey...

I WAS TRAVELLING WITH ANOTHER GUY AROUND EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST BY CAR.

But, shortly into our trip, we hit a donkey and totalled our car, so we had to start using buses. After that, I went off alone and ended up making my way to Kabul, then up through the Khyber Pass, through Pakistan and into India. That was the first part of the trip, and it was relatively uneventful. There were pretty much no dramas.

Three months later, it was time to head back to England, and that’s when the fun and games started. At that particular point in time [December 1979], two things were happening. One was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the other was the Iranian revolution, just across the border.

Unfortunately, I didn’t

know about any of this until our bus from India arrived in Afghanistan where we were told that the Russians had turned up and we’d better leave the country. The bus driver took us back to the border and straight into the middle of the Iranian revolution.

WE WERE TOLD AT THE IRANIAN BORDER THAT IT’D BE STUPID TO GO ACROSS, BUT WE HAD NO CHOICE.

We could either go back into Afghanistan with the Russians, or head into Iran where the Shah had just been replaced by Ayatollah Khomeini. Naively, we thought we’d be able to drive through Iran without trouble.

When I’d travelled through Tehran a few months earlier, you could feel revolution in the air, but now there was absolute

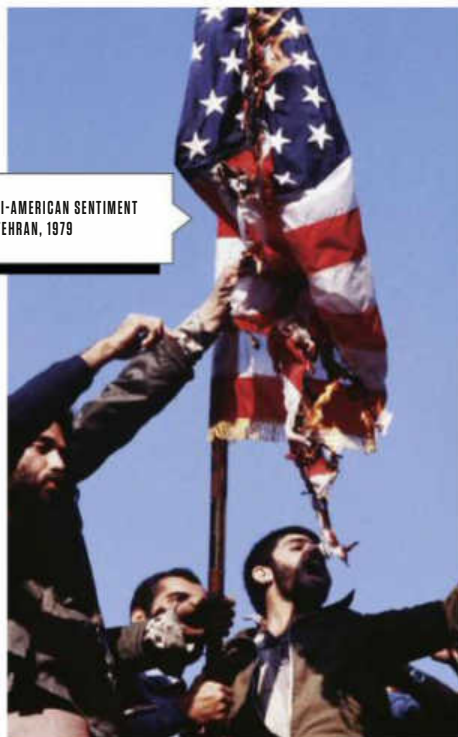
mayhem. There were people with guns everywhere and there was a real feeling of danger and lawlessness.

Anybody who was seen as European – and particularly American – was targeted. Some of the buses before us had been attacked and a few people were killed. It was then that it really began to dawn on me how serious the situation was.

We got to a place called Mashhad, a major Iranian city close to the border with Turkmenistan. There, it got really hairy. People were going round with guns and shouting. We were just a bunch of hippies. They stopped our bus and came on board. We thought, “Oh, this is it.” At that moment, we were terrified. The atmosphere was frozen. We thought we were going



ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT
IN TEHRAN, 1979



to get blown away.

The armed men briefly looked at our passports, then examined each of us closely, motioning for us to get off the bus.

We were thinking that they'd line us up and shoot us. I hadn't faced death like that before, but I understood it in that moment. Luckily, I think they realised we weren't American and were pretty harmless travellers.

WHEN WE TURNED AROUND, THE BUS BLEW UP. I think they'd put something in the petrol tank. There was a huge boom followed by a wave of heat coming from the fireball. We were on the floor with our hands over our ears. I'm sure the armed men were grinning. Then they just drove off and left us there. After that,

we were advised by a local to travel at night. The group split apart.

Travelling mostly alone, it took five nights for me to hitch to the Turkish border. In the daytime, I had to find my own way, hiding out behind petrol stations or anywhere that was dry and warm where I could sleep outside. At this point, I really didn't want to put my head above the parapet.

I had a little bit of Iranian money and was able to buy kebabs from roadhouses along the way. I ate when I could, managing about four meals during my escape. I weighed just 7st when I came back to England, partly through the enforced diet and partly through stress I'd faced.

There were a few nights when I thought I was going to be captured. A couple of

times when I was hitching, people stopped their cars to look, then drove on. I knew I was taking my own life in my hands, but I had no choice. I managed to hitch a few rides right across Iran to a place called Tabriz. It was pro-Shah, so we were quite safe there. A lot of the trouble was in Tehran and the larger cities. The smaller places had problems but it wasn't as chaotic.

From Tabriz, I made my way to the Turkish border. At that point, the Russians had started to come down to protect their frontiers. Rather than be allowed into Turkey, any strays like me were led around the top of the Turkey/Soviet border and then let into the country. I didn't fear the Russians – I just thought, "Thank God I'm out." **FHM**

What happened next?

01 Roger has since travelled to the Far East and America. He has never returned to Afghanistan or Iran.

02 He doesn't know what happened to the other members of the bus party, describing the experience as being "every man and woman for themselves".

03 Roger's book about his experiences, *Fighting For Light: The Travels Of A Tin Pot Warrior*, is out now (£8.99, Emerald).

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

10 SIGNS YOU'RE LIVING IN A HUNGER GAMES-STYLE DYSTOPIA



Spies are everywhere

You realise you might be living in a young adult novel when your neighbour's nine-year-old threatens to report you to the police after you comment that Grand Emperor Cameron has started looking a bit like a toad.

09

Local kids are communicating in code

Noticed a reduction in the amount of shit, tinny music you hear on the bus? Spotted the local yooof issuing bizarre three-finger salutes to each other? It just might be that they're in the throes of an anarchic adolescent uprising. Or, they've been sniffing glue.

08

London becomes a separate country

The capital becomes an exclusive playground for Russian oligarchs and chinless bankers, pricing out cockneys and the under-thirties. Everyone else lives in barely functioning shanty towns with reduced public spending and cash-grabbing leaders. See also: life in 2015.

07

Twitter gets dark

Once the domain of lawless trolls and Katie Hopkins, Twitter becomes strangely obedient and rational. Those having a go at Royal Mail are hunted down and whipped. #IgnoranceIsStrength

06

The X Factor's ratings climb year by year

Simon Cowell's cash cow becomes must-watch telly after the judges' houses bit is replaced by a fight to the death overseen by newly appointed Lord Joe McElderry in a blood-splattered cape.

05

Your younger siblings go all 'Battle Royale'

After not reading the small print on their UCAS forms, sixth-formers inadvertently enter themselves into a government-sanctioned gladiator tournament. First up: your little brother vs that lad from the local Co-op. Should be a spicy one.

04

Jeremy Corbyn renames the Labour party 'The Resistance'

After David Cameron starts talking about

the ritual slaughter of infants on *Question Time*, the opposition leader guides loyal left-wingers to a new underground utopian community.

03

Nando's isn't so cheeky any more

Under the new order, Nando's is accessible only to the rich, who gorge on peri-peri chicken while the poor get 'food substitutes' and Rola Cola.

02

Yorkshire becomes a separate state

After a tyrannical dictator announces the renaming of the UK's counties as numbered districts, there's a national outcry. Yorkshire locals set up an independent state led by Alex Turner.

01

Everyone's tooled-up to the nines

Was there a man sharpening a knife on your bus to work today? Has Asda started stocking crossbows next to the pasties? Is your nan packing a Uzi 9mm? You may be living in a futuristic dystopia. Or you could be on the Isle of Man.

WORDS: SIMON HUDSON. PHOTOGRAPHY: COLOUR FORCE/LONGATE/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

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